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SOFTBALL

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Softball

BY

ARTHUR T. NOREN

*Joint Rules Committee
On Softball*

Revised with 1947 Rules

NEW YORK

A. S. BARNES AND COMPANY

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Revised Edition

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The Story of Softball

Most of our popular games and sports have a long history of play in this country as well as in other lands. Softball, however, has taken its place among our great sports in less than forty years, with the greatest impetus coming during the past six years. Claims and counterclaims have been made concerning the invention of the game of softball. Unlike basketball, baseball and volley-ball, absolute proof as to the inventor of the game and location of the original game is not available. Perhaps, because the present game of softball evolved from humble variations of its parent-game, baseball, there never was a time and place the softball was born. Like "Topsy," it just grew.

A game, similar to baseball, adapted for play in gymnasiums was called indoor baseball. Credit for inventing this game (the first step in the evolution of softball) has been given to a Mr. George W. Hancock of the Farragut Boat Club of Chicago. I quote from a printed volume of the Indoor Baseball Guide for 1906, published by the American Sports Publishing Company. "The game of indoor baseball was invented in Chicago in 1887. Members of the Farragut Boat Club had assembled in the gymnasium hall on Thanksgiving Day of that year and an old boxing glove was carelessly thrown around the room. One of the boys took up a broom and batted the glove back to the thrower, when George W. Hancock suddenly exclaimed, "Say, boys, let's play ball!" Thereupon the huge wrestling mat was hauled around to answer for a diamond and a lively game of "scrub" took place, the broom-handle having been broken off and used for the bat and the unwieldy boxing glove taking the place of a ball. It proved great fun and at its conclusion Mr. Hancock gathered the members around him and unfolded a plan which had occurred to him as the players were sliding around the hall.

"I believe this affair can be worked into a regular game of baseball which can be played indoors, and if you all come down Saturday night I'll make up some rules and have a ball and bat which will suit the purpose of the sport and do no damage to the surroundings."

And so, on the night announced, two teams were chosen, and Mr. Hancock read the rules he had made up to suit the surroundings and

presented to the gaze of the assembled members the huge ball and small rubber-tipped bat which have since been identified with the game. The contest was one of the funniest performances ever witnessed and members and visitors went away loud in their praises of Indoor Baseball, as the new sport was christened.

The game of indoor baseball with the larger ball and smaller bat was quickly transferred to the outdoor playground. It is here that we place the origin of the name, "Indoor—Outdoor," as the game was called in some sections of the country.



PLATE 1. Softball in Sioux City, Iowa

Playground leaders in Minneapolis and St. Paul as well as Chicago saw the possibilities of the game and soon worked out a code of rules which are fundamentally the framework of the rules of today. In 1908, an organization called the National Amateur Playground Ball Association of the United States was formed. It is curious coincidence that this organization which preceded the formation of the present Joint Rules Committee on Softball by fifteen years and which preceded the Amateur Softball Association of America by twenty-five years, also was formed in Illinois, in the city of Chicago. In 1908, this organization had national representation, a printed official handbook, plans for inter-city competition and great hopes for future growth. The rules

printed in the 1908 handbook by the American Sports Publishing Company are, with few exceptions, similar to the Official Rules of Softball for 1946.

The hopes of the pioneers of this game for its growth have been fulfilled. However, the growth and development of this national organization did not continue and it soon disappeared as an effective medium for promoting the game or securing uniform adoption of rules. The game caught on; for it filled a long felt need. Somebody tried it outdoors; it proved to be just as satisfactory as the indoor game. All over the country, playground leagues arose; these were unofficial, hit or miss, helter-skelter organizations of untrained teams, joyfully and fiercely intent on licking the tar out of the boys across the tracks or in the next town. Newspapers publicized and encouraged the game. Parks, playgrounds and recreation agencies instituted the game in preference to baseball. Alert businessmen became the sponsors of favorite teams, furnishing them with uniforms for the privilege of having their names embroidered on them. Colorful names like "Triangle Tigers," "Purple Arrows," and "Jolly Rogers" appeared on sweatshirts and sweaters everywhere. From this beginning the game has grown until it now reaches out into all parts of the country, and thousands upon thousands are entertained, either as active participants or as enthusiastic followers of the teams engaged in the sport.

SOFTBALL COMMITTEE ORGANIZED

The name "Softball" is today applied to the game that has also been known as kitten ball, army ball, playground ball, mush ball, diamond ball, indoor-outdoor and other names. The difference in names and conflicts in rules had caused so much confusion that in 1923, at Springfield, Illinois, at the National Recreation Congress a committee of men who were directing public recreation programs in cities throughout the United States was delegated by Joseph Lee, the great leader of the playground movement in this country to standardize the game. To bring uniformity into the game this committee was known as the Playground Baseball Committee. This committee, after much deliberation, finally agreed on and published an approved, official set of rules. These rules they urged upon the general public.

Walter L. Hakanson, active leader of the sport in Colorado, claims that the name "Softball" was first adopted at a meeting held in that state in 1926. At an organization meeting in Chicago, in 1932, many names were considered but it was decided to accept the Colorado

name and the game has been nationally known as Softball from that year.

It is not difficult to imagine the magnitude of the problem confronting the committee. Softball was being played in every hamlet, village, town, city and state in the nation, and in many foreign countries. A dozen sizes of balls were in use, as well as, many different bat-lengths, every conceivable base-length, and a bewildering array of variations in rules.

The Playground Baseball Committee of the National Recreation Association appointed in 1923 by Joseph Lee, was enlarged in 1923 to include representatives of the Young Men's Christian Association, the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the American Physical

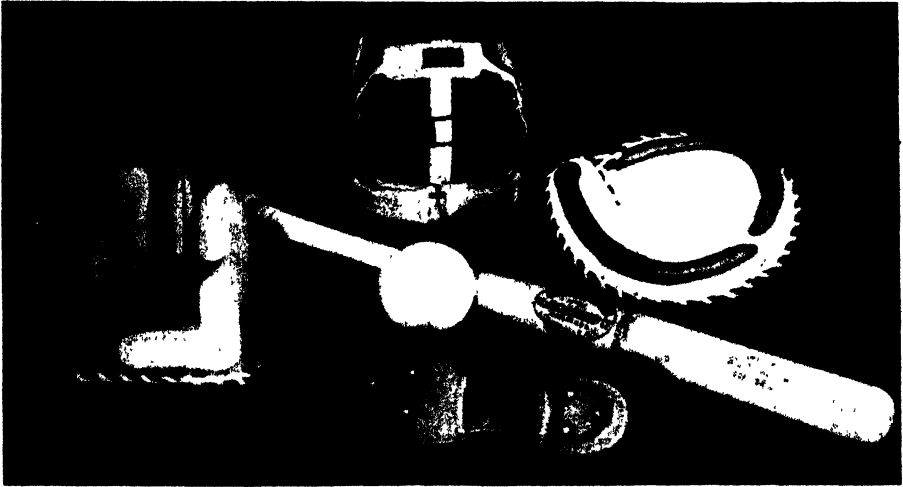


PLATE 2. Equipment has been Standardized

Education Association and was called the Joint Rules Committee on Softball.

At the meeting of the committee held in Washington, D. C., in October 1934, at the time of the Recreation Congress, it was decided to invite other national organizations to membership. Those which accepted were the National Softball Association, Amateur Softball Association of America, Catholic Youth Organization and Young Men's Hebrew Association. It was also recommended at the Washington meeting that the Joint Rules Committee on Softball be reorganized and that a permanent incorporated organization be established. It was

felt that such a body would give additional prestige, greater representation and insure permanent growth of the game of softball.

One of the most important forward steps in 1934 was the decision by various groups interested in softball to secure publication of one set of rules. The committee on publication secured the support of the principal sports equipment manufacturers in their proposal that any rules published for this game would be in accord with the official rules published by the Joint Rules Committee.

SOFTBALL HAS ARRIVED

The game that has been played as a recreational activity, using fundamental skills of the traditional American game of baseball, has evolved into a national sport that is accepted and played by outstanding athletic clubs from coast to coast. Today softball stands on its own feet occupying an important position in the sports world and securing in terms of active players and spectators' interest, a participation that is probably not excelled by any organized team game. The former differences concerning names, rules and jurisdiction incident to the early days have largely disappeared and the sport has now a general acceptance under the term "Softball" that gives the game a national significance and standing.

THE PROMOTION OF SOFTBALL

The Joint Rules Committee on Softball had purposely divorced its activities from the organization of state and national competition between teams. Naturally those interested in inter-city and inter-state competition were desirous of perfecting an organization that would serve their needs. In 1932-1933 there were announcements of several so-called national organizations claiming jurisdiction of the game and inviting national support. Most of these soon disappeared and today, general recognition is given to the Amateur Softball Association of America as the organization which directs state and national competition and whose champions are recognized by the softball world. Its affiliation with the Amateur Athletic Union placed it among the great family of amateur American sports-governing organizations.

ADVANTAGES OF THE SPORT

Despite this tremendous public interest, the game has remained amateur throughout its history. Some few attempts have been made to professionalize the sport, but it remains today exactly what it was

in the early 1900's, a game played by amateurs for their own enjoyment.

The benefits of the game have been summed up briefly and well by the Staff of the Intramural Sports Department, University of Michigan: "Because of the minimum equipment required, the small playing area needed, the interest shown by both sexes, whether young or old, and because it so nearly resembles our national game, the game of softball should continue to grow in popularity and number of participants.



PLATE 3. Sir Hubert Wilkins, Explorer and Softball Player



PLATE 4. Lowell Thomas Coaches Lowell, Jr.

"There can be little dispute as to the desirability of placing softball, with its countless benefits, into the school program. It is a health contributing and invigorating game; one that presents numerous educational possibilities, and one that offers untold recreational and social advantages. In most localities it can be played any season except winter, and where facilities are available the indoor game may be played in inclement weather. The game, if properly supervised and ordinary precautions are taken, has no outstanding hazard. It is a scientific game demanding the use of mental alertness as well as physical skill; it allows individual skill and yet instills co-operation; it calls for judgment and

quick thinking; it develops co-ordination; and it permits action for all players at almost all times.

"From a community standpoint the game has real merit, for in our many leagues, classified as sandlot, playground, interscholastic, industrial, church, minor and major city, players of all nationalities, of all strata of civic life, a melting pot of individuals, are brought together in this variation of our great national American game.



PLATE 5. Industrial League, Los Angeles, California

"The game is interesting not only to the players but also to the spectators, as manifested by the numerous grandstand score-keepers, the scores of bleacher umpires calling the plays as they see them for their side, and the many would-be managers showing the tenseness of trying to anticipate the strategy of the opponents and predicting what the home team is going to do.

"Finally, softball has a real carry-over value, for informal games may be organized at outings and picnics, and almost every city with a recreational program will want to include softball for adults as well as for the younger groups. It can be played successfully for a much longer period in life than can regulation baseball."

THE POPULARITY OF SOFTBALL

Last year in the United States, on the basis of figures compiled by the Amateur Softball Association of America and the National Recreation Association, more than 10,000,000 players played on organized teams under auspices of playgrounds, schools, industries, Y.M.C.A., church, fraternal or independent management. The Amateur Softball Association states that close to 100,000 teams were associated with that organization in 1945.

In the city of Chicago, typical of hundreds of other cities, many fraternal, religious, educational and commercial organizations now sponsor softball teams. A partial list indicates the extent of this recent development.

Chicago Park District	300 teams
Chicago Board of Education	300 "
Catholic Youth Organization	100 "
Knights of Columbus	50 "
B'Nai B'Rith Youth Organization	175 "
Bureau of Parks	200 "
Italo-American Youth Organization	30 "

Assuming that each of these 1,100-odd teams played an average of about 10 games in tournaments per year, a total of over 10,000 softball games per year is indicated. In addition, thousands of other games are played by unorganized teams on hundreds of playgrounds. Crowds as large as 30,000 have witnessed night games in St. Louis and Los Angeles. The World Series finals in Cleveland attract thousands to this high point in the season's play. The twilight games played on sandlot, playground, parks and in stadiums attract from 100 to ten thousand. Gross attendance running into hundreds of millions of ardent, partisan softball fans should be proof enough that softball has grown up and should be recognized as the most popular sport in America today.

Undoubtedly, one of the most popular sports with our men in the service during the war years was Softball. In every corner of the globe, wherever there was a lull in the action, men brought out bats and softballs, staked off a diamond, and the game was on. England, Germany, Alaska, Iceland, and the far-flung islands of the Pacific all resounded to the cry of "Batter Up"!, and most of the time it was for Softball. The game grew in popularity with our fellows all over the world because it was more than just a sport; it was a touch of home. And, now that the war is over, Softball seems destined to become one of the major sports in the country.

When the 1945 World's Softball Championships closed in Cleveland, Ohio on September 10th, and the Zollner Manufacturing Company of Fort Wayne, Indiana had won the designation of World's Champion (Men's Division) while the Jax Brewers of New Orleans, Louisiana had attained the goal of competitive softball among women players, the game of softball had passed through another successful year of play at home. More than a half million organized teams played in leagues this past year,—games on sandlots, city playgrounds, athletic fields and in great parks. In most towns and cities in every State in the Union, leagues and tournaments were organized to provide opportunity for competition that would eventually determine the team to represent that State in the national championships. And for every team that entered a league to gain championship recognition there were twenty teams playing softball for "the fun of the game". Sportswriters and officials who are close to the game have stated that more than 6,000,000 players participated in organized games last year and that the fan attendance would reach astronomical figures.

This is softball, baseball's kid brother, the new American fever, the sport miracle, the game that ranges in its demand of skill and ability from the recreative efforts of Lowell Thomas' "Nine Old Men" to the lightning fast, stream-lined game which attracted players of the calibre of Ken Keltner of Cleveland and Tommy Henrich of the New York Yankees, who came up through the softball way. It demands the type of skill and energy which was demonstrated in Detroit in 1940 when Toronto, with Cam Ecclestone pitching, defeated Phoenix, Arizona 1-0, in a twenty-four inning game, the longest tournament game on record. In the last inning, Len Murray, seventeen year old pitching ace of Phoenix was hurling the ball as fast as he did at the start of the game, hours earlier.

The Joint Rules Committee on Softball, with representatives of several national organizations which promote and sponsor softball around the country, held in 1946 one of the most important meetings in their history. During the past four years, when no alterations in the rules were made because of the war situation, suggestions came from all over the country on ideas for improving the game. This year the Committee decided to put some of these changes into effect. Among the principal changes affected was a decision to eliminate the tenth man, or short-fielder, from the lineup. This important change was made because it is believed it will accentuate scoring, as many of the drives that the short-fielder would ordinarily have "gobbled up" will fall

safely for base hits. It was also decided to shorten the baseline from sixty to fifty-five feet. This means that many of the infield plays, where a man has been called out by inches, will go the other way. More men will get on base. It was also agreed to lengthen the batter's box one foot in the direction of the pitcher so, if the pitcher has a sharp-breaking hook, the batter can step up on it and have a better chance of hitting it. And, finally, it was decided that if a batter is hit with a pitched ball, he will automatically take his base. This will minimize the danger of players being injured by a hard ball and will cause the pitcher to concentrate more on control.

There was considerable discussion in the Committee before these radical changes were approved by a majority vote. It will be of interest to know that fourteen of the fifteen Committee members were in attendance at the meeting, and, therefore, these decisions represent a complete thinking of all members. It is believed that these changes will increase interest in the game, both from the players' and spectators' standpoint. The spectators will see more scoring, more base hits and more base running, and the players will be getting on base more often, thus taking a more active part in the game. It has been recognized that, in the past, the pitcher has dominated softball, and these changes represent an effort to equalize this situation. It is hoped to emphasize hitting and scoring and de-emphasizing pitching. The popularity of softball as a sport in this country is indicated by the fact that last year there were approximately 600,000 teams in organized leagues all over the country. This represents about 6,000,000 people, both men and women, who are playing the game; and, from every indication, an even greater number will participate this year.

SOFTBALL

I · Softball and Baseball

CHIEF DIFFERENCES

There are certain technical differences between baseball and softball, games which are essentially the same in fundamentals. The softball diamond is smaller, the ball larger and not quite so hard; the pitching is different; the bat is shorter and lighter. Softball is a seven-inning game, compared to nine innings in baseball. There are differences in base-running and in uniform. But undoubtedly the greatest difference between the games is that softball is faster.

Softball is a symphony of speed—speed in pitching, speed in base-running, speed in fielding. Everything in the game happens in the twinkling of an eye and, far from requiring less skill than baseball, excellency in softball demands more dexterity, combined with lightning speed.

The fast thinker shines on the baseball diamond but in softball there is absolutely no place for the slow thinker. Distance between the bases in baseball is 90 feet—in softball it is 55 feet. Naturally, then, it takes the batter only two-thirds as long to race down to first base after hitting the ball. The fielders have little chance to bobble or hesitate. A ground ball must be gobbled up cleanly and shot over to first base with machine-like precision to insure retiring the batter.

The pitcher's box is 43 feet from home-plate. Of course, the softball pitcher isn't permitted the freedom of wind-up allowed his baseball counterpart. But the softball pitcher can peg that not-so-oversized sphere in there with amazing speed and Mr. Batter must think and act quickly. He hasn't much chance to figure out the pitch. If timing is important in baseball batting—and the stars of the game will tell you it is—timing is everything in softball batting.

Softball is more a defensive game than baseball mainly because the softball pitcher has more mastery over the hitter. In topflight softball the scores usually are low. One run means more—and so the differences in technique are many.

DIFFERENCES IN TECHNIQUE

In softball, as in baseball, it is of paramount importance for the lead-off man to "get on." And once he's on first, there's less danger of his being retired in a double play than in baseball for the obvious reason that the distance between the bases is so short. It takes perfection on the part of the infielders to complete a double play on a ground ball and even in the case of a line drive hit directly at a fielder, there is less chance of the base-runner's being doubled up because he is prevented by the rules from leaving base until the ball actually has left the pitcher's hand.

Often in baseball the hit-and-run, with the runner taking a long lead, results disastrously when the batter lines into a double killing. The chances of that in softball are slim.

Good bunters are invaluable in softball, if for no other purpose than to advance a runner from first to second, where an outfield single will score him. For, while the chances are against a double play, a ground ball usually will result in a force-out with a runner on first base.

Base-running technique is considerably different from that featured in baseball. That "extra base" is important in both games and in softball it's easier to get—but, of course, the main thing is knowing when to try. And in stealing bases there's no battle of wits between pitcher and runner. The softball base-runner can take no lead. Therefore, his speed in starting is of vital importance.

Although free-scoring games occasionally are seen, by far the large majority of softball contests between good teams are marked by few runs. Even the best batsmen are unable consistently to hit safely against good pitching, since the natural advantage in softball is with the pitcher. The baseball moundsman who chucks up ten strike-outs in a game is decidedly unusual; more often than not a baseball pitcher turning in an excellent performance—perhaps a shutout or a low-hit game—will cause not more than two or three of the opposing hitters to go back to the bench victims of strikes. In softball, however, the reverse is usually true. Most of the effective pitchers depend upon the strike-out as their chief weapon, although, as discussed in a later chapter, they do not attempt to fan every batter who comes up to the plate.

A run or two, then, carries much more significance in softball than in baseball. Big innings—such as have marked the attack of the great

New York Yankees in baseball's American League—are decidedly infrequent in good softball. The nine-man softball defense and the handicaps placed on the batter militate strongly against a succession of safe hits. And good softball pitchers have mastered control so that seldom is a series of bases on balls witnessed. Even if the pitcher has “lost his stuff” and is having difficulty with his control, he can afford to “lay it in there” and depend upon the batter's hitting it to one of his fielders with a good deal more confidence than can his baseball counterpart.

Accordingly, the softball technique is necessarily concerned with the idea of getting a few runs and protecting a slender lead. And while there is less finesse, less complication, to base-running, that department cannot be too strongly stressed. A mistake on the part of the base-runner which may kill him off and end a budding rally often may be the difference between victory and defeat.

Every out counts heavily. Baseball games sometimes are marked by the staging of rallies producing two runs or more after two men are out. Such an occurrence is practically unheard of in softball, barring the unlikely development of a home-run with a man or two on base.

The difference in the length of the games is an important factor, too. How many baseball contests are decided by rallies in the eighth and ninth innings? How often do you see the home team, two or three runs bad, coming up for the last half of the eighth still hopeful, still looking for the opposing pitcher to crack and ready to make the most of any possible chance? Seven-inning pitchers don't last long in baseball's fast company.

But in softball the pitcher whose team gets off to an early lead is working with everything in his favor. He can bear down the rest of the way, realizing that it is only a few innings and that unless his mates slip up in the field the chances are against a big rally on the part of his opponents.

Which is not to say that the softball team trailing by a run or two in the late innings might just as well give up the ship. The old saying that anything can happen in baseball also applies, although in a lesser degree, to softball. The team that keeps battling, even in the face of seemingly certain defeat, will occasionally find its reward in a sudden break. At least, it's worth fighting for.

So baseball and softball are brothers under the skin, yet despite

the family resemblance, they are decidedly different in certain important phases. In one important factor they are identical: The big objective in each is to score more runs than your opponents. But there is, of necessity, a difference in the technique of attempting to achieve that common objective.

II · Pitching

Far and away the most important man on any softball team is the fellow who stands in the pitcher's box forty-three feet from home-plate, twists himself into a variety of contortions and then, with an underhand movement of his right arm (or left arm, as the case may be), sends the ball whistling toward the batter. Pitching is supposed to be about seventy per cent of the strength of a baseball team. The percentage is even higher in softball.

When softball was in its infancy, few realized the extent to which the pitching art could be developed. Baseball players taking up the game regarded the pitching job as something peculiar, albeit interesting. It was difficult to throw that way but after you practiced it a while you could pitch underhanded fairly smoothly and get the ball over the plate most of the time. That was the main idea—to put the ball where the batter could hit it. . . .

What a far cry to the present-day softball pitching star! Who would have thought that the boy who lobbed it over on the playgrounds would one day master good hitters simply by overpowering them with blinding speed? Who would have thought that softball pitchers could develop a complete assortment of "stuff," including fast ones that zipped by, sharp-breaking curves that baffled, slow, spinning change-of-pace balls that the batter just couldn't hit solidly?

But today the softball pitcher definitely is ahead of the hitter, even though changing rules have cramped his style and lengthened the pitching distance. The team that lacks good pitching cannot hope for success and the team that would seek championship honors must have top-flight pitching. For, no matter how strong its batsmen, nor how adroit its fielders, the team that attempts to match ordinary pitching against the high type of hurling exemplified by the best in the game is conceding far too great an advantage to its opponents. The pitching ace can muffle the bats of the mightiest hitters.

It is therefore essential that the player who takes up softball pitching must be conscientious, hard-working, level-headed and inclined to

place the good of his team above his ambition for personal glory. The strike-out artist is not always a winning pitcher. Not infrequently you'll find that he is the type who finds consolation in the crumbs of individual achievement even though his team be defeated. He struck out fourteen in a seven-inning game—so it couldn't have been his fault that his side lost the battle, 3 to 2. There were errors at critical points, else he might have had a shutout.

Control is the most important single attribute of the successful pitcher but this does not mean merely control of the pitching delivery. Control of himself is just as vital.

For the pitcher who is brilliant while things are going smoothly but who "blows up" when an error is committed behind him or when he thinks an adverse decision of the umpire unjust is not worth his salt. Not only does he lose the game by losing his temper, he upsets his entire team and his prima donna tactics frequently disrupt it.

Ability to put the ball where he wants to—and where the batter doesn't want it—is an invaluable asset to any pitcher. The major technical requirements of successful softball pitching are control, speed, and change of pace.

With the pitching distance so short, it is obvious that speed can be a tremendous weapon but it must not be supposed that by throwing only fast balls the pitcher is going to achieve phenomenal success. In the first place, no pitcher can bear down incessantly for a full game, mowing down the batters as fast as they come up to the plate. And in the second place, any good hitter is going to adjust his timing to meet the fastest of deliveries, once he knows that pitcher's style.

So speed should be used often, but not always. Ability to pace himself is of no small benefit to the softball pitcher. He can't give everything he's got with every pitch, obviously, but if he can control the ball and avoid "fat" pitches he can also save his greatest efforts for the tight spots, when it is absolutely necessary that he overpower the hitter.

A variety of offerings, serving to keep the batter guessing, must be developed. By using slightly different grips and twists various reactions can be obtained with the ball in a legal type of delivery. Curve-ball pitching once was unheard of in softball but, like fast-ball hurling, it has been developed to a surprising degree.

The curve is obtained by holding the fingers on the outside of the ball—to the right—and twisting the forearm to the left as the ball is

released. This, of course, applies to a right-handed pitcher. The exact reverse is the method for left-handers.

Even if the pitcher cannot develop a curve ball that breaks with any real snap, he will find that by twisting his wrist in the delivery he can apply enough spin to the ball to make it very difficult to hit solidly. A well-controlled spin ball is a mighty effective delivery, not for the purpose of rolling up strike-outs but to make the batter hit it. Pop flies and harmless grounders are induced by this comparatively simple pitch. It also is of no small importance as a change-of-pace ball.

The pitcher should study the pitching rule and make certain that in his delivery he obeys it to the letter—for the illegal pitch resulting in penalty to the pitcher certainly has a harmful effect upon his entire team. He must remember to come to a full stop before taking one hand off the ball at the start of the wind-up or back-swing and to practice his delivery so that the one step forward permitted by the rules is a perfectly natural, well-timed movement.

To the casual observer, footwork on the part of a pitcher may not seem to be important but it is—vitally so. Controlling the ball means controlling the feet. The pitcher should study the length of stride which gives him the most comfortable pitching delivery and permits his putting the ball where he wants to. Any change in stride—a longer or shorter step, or a step not exactly in the direction which best suits his delivery—will adversely affect his control.

His footwork is important, too, in fielding his position, because the pitcher who can handle ground balls hit directly to him or to either side of the box can help his team and himself in no small measure. Naturally, the pitcher who gets his feet out of control and is off balance after completing his delivery is in no position to make a quick movement in any direction to field a batted ball. And, with the distance from home-plate to first base so short, even momentary fumbling of a grounder may give the batsman a life.

It is wise to acquire the form of taking one long forward step with the left foot (for a right-handed pitcher) and in taking the weight on the left foot to relax the knee so that it acts as a spring, thus checking the forward motion without a sudden jar or jolt. In this way the pitcher can square himself toward the plate quickly to be in position to field the ball if necessary.

Too much stress cannot be placed on the advisability of remembering that he has eight team mates behind him. The pitcher who tries

to do it all—tries to strike out every batter—is inviting disaster. The constant strain of putting all he has on every pitch is bound to tell. He'll weaken. And when he gets into a hole, when the situation calls for a little bit more than he has been giving, he can't rise to the occasion. He has nothing left.

Roy Bartlett, one of the outstanding pitchers in the East from Elizabeth, New Jersey, describes his pitching technique.

"I take my position on the rubber with my feet about fourteen inches apart and my weight resting flat on both feet. (Plate 6)



PLATE 6. Pitching—First Position, Ray Bartlett

Place the thumb on the top seam and the first two fingers on the bottom seam. (Plate 7)



PLATE 7. Pitching—Finger Grip, Ray Bartlett

I then bring the ball back until my right arm is almost across my back. (Plate 8)



PLATE 8. Pitching—Wind-up, Ray Bartlett

Bringing the ball forward, I start the actual delivery and take one step forward with the left foot, pulling the right leg and left hip to the left, at the same time leaning to the right with my right shoulder. (Plate 9)



PLATE 9. Pitching—Underhand Delivery, Ray Bartlett

The pitch is continued with a full follow-through, snapping the ball with the wrist as it leaves the hand. At the end of the pitch (Plate 10) the wrist is about shoulder high with the right shoulder.



PLATE 10. Pitching—Follow-through, Ray Bartlett

This will make the ball curve to the right. After you assure yourself that you can always curve the ball with every pitch, then you can regulate your incurve more to the left, higher, lower, or practically all round the home plate.

“You must learn to go into this motion very quickly as it will give a deceptive delivery and one which the batter cannot follow, either by

your hand or your arm. This pitch, together with a slow ball, which is thrown by placing the full hand on the ball, gripping the seam in the line of the thumb, and going into the same motion with the exception that you pull back on the seam as you are ready to throw, will be sufficient for any pitcher."

If you would be a softball pitcher, a good softball pitcher, you must have an assortment of so-called "stuff". And stuff is a fast ball, a drop, an outcurve, and a change-of-pace or slow ball. But any pitcher's effectiveness will be increased through the proper knowledge and use of the "wind-up".

Basically, there are but two wind-ups. They are the "windmill" and the "figure eight".

The "windmill" wind-up was first introduced into world's championship competition in 1934 by Paul Watson of Arizona. The deception of this popular wind-up lies in the fact that the batter is confused by his lack of knowledge of just when the ball is going to leave the pitcher's hand. No one but the pitcher can know just how many rotations his arm will make before the delivery.

In starting the windmill pitch place your feet squarely upon the pitching rubber. Your feet should be about twelve inches apart. Hold the ball in both hands with the arms resting lightly against the hips. *Relax!* Do not tighten up until you start the pitch. This should be the position while getting the catcher's signal.

Begin the circular motion by swinging the arm forward and upward, bringing the left foot off the rubber to maintain the proper balance. At the highest point of the circular delivery the elbow is straight, as the power of this delivery comes from the shoulder muscles rather than from any twisting action.

During the sweep in the backward, downward motion, the elbow is still straight but the left leg is further extended to equalize balance. At the time the ball is released the body weight is shifted rapidly from the right to the left leg. That is the windmill. From there on it is practice.

The figure-eight wind-up is the oldest but still the most widely used. Some of the leading hurlers use this form of wind-up, including Harold "Shifty" Gears of Rochester, Harry Kraft of South Bend, George Manrose, of Gladwaters, Texas, Carl "Two-Gun" Hunt, of Sapulpa, Oklahoma, Casey Drop of Kenosha, and Cam Ecclestone, of Toronto.

The effectiveness of this wind-up lies in the rise which the ball takes after leaving the pitcher's hand. This is because the ball is thrown

from a point around the pitcher's knees and rises steadily until it crosses the plate about shoulder high to the batter.

In starting the pitch the player assumes the same position as in the windmill wind-up. Then the front part of the figure-eight is started by turning the body slightly to the right, and swinging the left leg up off the rubber, swinging the weight of the body to the right leg, and at the same time bringing the ball with a circular motion to a point opposite the hip.

The back part of the figure-eight is made by continuing the sweep and bringing the ball in back of the body by sharply bending the elbow and wrist. Now the body weight is shifted from the right leg. It is important to notice that the wrist has been twisted, completing the figure-eight when delivering the ball to the batter. The weight should have been fully shifted to the left leg to allow the maximum amount of follow through.

If you would be a good softball pitcher by all means practice the wind-up that seems the most natural for you. Many a good figure-eight pitcher has been thrown off his stride by trying to master the windmill wind-up. The motions explained for these two styles of wind-ups may, at first, seem awkward, but through constant practice anyone may develop a smooth and effective delivery.

If you plan to pitch softball this summer, get an early start. If the weather is unfavorable, practice indoors. Speed and control will come only after weeks of planned practice. Pass up the idea of fanning the batter. Put all of your thought on gaining control. Speed will develop as your wind-up becomes free and easy.

DESCRIPTION OF A SOFTBALL PITCHING CHART

The accompanying chart was designed to be of help to pitchers, particularly in the winter months when it is impossible to get outdoors, and is sent to us by H. Ross Bunce. The chart can be painted on a canvas strip, and hung up against a mat at one end of the gymnasium or hallway, or it can be simply chalked on any wall or surface that is convenient.

The chart is designed to portray a space which is as wide as the pitcher's plate, seventeen inches, and the distance in height between the batter's knees and shoulders. The pitcher stands forty feet from this chart and throws the ball at the design, observing the following precautions: A legal pitch should be used in every pitch. The figures as indicated should be reversed for left-handed batters. Keep score of

the pitches, and after a number of throws, say ten, compare the score with that of another pitcher. A pitch shoulder-high and inside is the hardest ball to hit and, therefore, is given the highest rating. A pitch across the knees and inside is another difficult ball to hit and, therefore, receives the next highest rating. The pitcher should never groove the ball except when he has a score of two and three against him, therefore the center of the chart is given a zero rating.

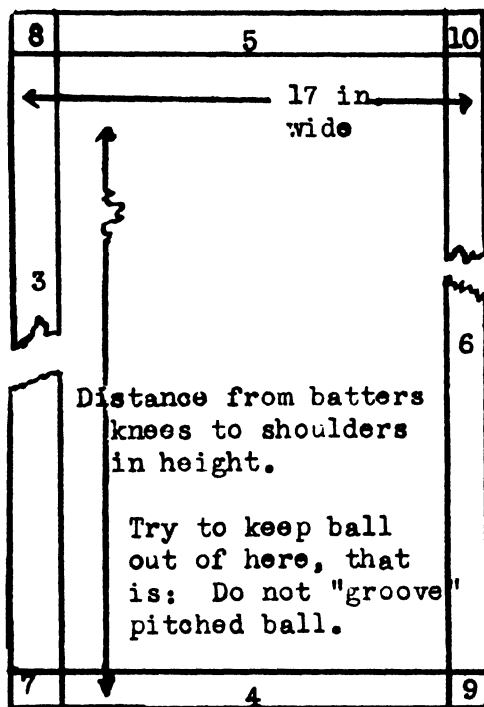


PLATE 11. Softball Pitching Chart

Skill comes to a pitcher as his ability to hit the corner shoulder-high or knee-high develops. This chart will lend itself to a variety of treatments by men using it. It has proven to be a most valuable means of keeping pitcher's "arm and eye" in condition during the winter months. One pitcher who used this chart very effectively says that when he is pitching to a particularly difficult batter, he has formed the habit of forgetting that a batter is standing in the box and simply visualizes the chart in front of him and pitches at the chart. This helped to prevent any nervousness that he might have had in a tight spot.

Through the courtesy of Wheaties Library of Sports, the following suggestions on how to pitch are taken from "Want To Be A Softball Champion?"

If you want to be a pitcher, you must be able to deliver the ball to certain spots—you must have good control. You also must have a good pitching style or delivery and be able to throw curves, fast and slow balls. But you should learn control *first!*

THE PITCHING POSITION

According to rule, before the wind-up, you must hold the ball in both hands in front of your body. At the same time both feet must be on the ground and touching the pitcher's plate. You can use either of the two positions shown in the pictures. Your pivot foot (the right foot for a right-handed pitcher) must stay on the ground until the ball has been released. You can take only one step. It must be directly forward and toward the batter as you make the pitch. Another rule says that you cannot use a sidearm or freak delivery. The ball must be thrown underhanded. Your wrist cannot be farther away from your body than your elbow is. Your hand and wrist must pass your body before you release the ball.

THE GRIP

Grip the ball so that you can put lots of "stuff" on every pitch. Learn to pitch curves, fast and slow balls by gripping the ball with four fingers. That is the way most coaches now teach boys to start to pitch. Unless you are throwing a slow ball, be sure to grasp the ball with a firm grip on the seams. That will help you put more stuff on the ball.

After you learn to control the ball and to curve it with the four finger grip, change to the three and then to the two finger grip. Note that the ball is grasped *on the seams* with the thumb and first and second fingers.

Always use the same grip for every pitch. This keeps the batter from seeing what sort of ball you are going to throw.

CONTROL

Control is most important. You can learn to pitch to different spots only through much practice. Get a good catcher in your neighborhood and have him place his mitt either shoulder or knee high and *always* behind the outside or inside corners of the plate. That will give you different targets. Learn to pitch to them. Never get tired of pitching at such targets if you want to be a champion pitcher. Start without a wind-up at first. Just hold the ball and stand in a comfortable position. Then swing your arm back, stride and pitch.

Learn to control your pitches before you try to curve the ball. Control gives you confidence which you need to be a good pitcher. **PRAC-TICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE** to improve your control.



PLATE 12. Control—Rise ball (left), fast ball (right)

THE RISE BALL (Plate 12)

The rise ball is a common and very good pitch in softball. As you bring your arm through for the delivery, just before the pitch, the knuckles of your hand should be toward the batter. Then snap your wrist so that after the pitch your fingers point toward the batter with the knuckles of your hand upward. The rise ball has a backward spin which makes it break upward.

THE FAST BALL (Plate 12)

To pitch a fast ball release the ball from the *ends* of the four fingers when you use the four finger grip. Release the ball from the *ends* of the middle and index finger when you use the two finger grip.



PLATE 13. Control—Drop ball (left), slow ball (right)

THE DROP BALL (Plate 13)

The grip for the drop ball is the same as for the rise ball. The difference between the two pitches is the release. To make the ball drop you must give it a downward spin. This is done by gripping it firmly. As you bring your arm down through for the delivery, just before the pitch, the palm of your hand should be toward the batter.

THE SLOW BALL (Plate 13)

The slow ball is used to change the pace or speed of pitches when batters are expecting a fast pitch or curve. To fool the batters your wind-up (arm, leg and body action) and speed of delivery must be the same for slow balls as for your other pitches. The grip of the ball is the same as for the rise ball with *one* important difference—the ball is held *very loosely* by the fingers. The delivery is the same as for the rise ball. The ball slides from the ends of the fingers.

PITCHING HINTS

1. Study the batter. Find his weaknesses and pitch to them.
2. Feed high or low outside pitches and slow balls to fast swingers.
3. Feed low pitches to batters who stand quite erect.
4. Feed high pitches to batters who squat.
5. Batters who step toward the plate with the front foot usually are weak on inside pitches; those who step away from the plate are most likely weak on outside pitches.
6. When a batter seems nervous, make him wait for your pitches. Don't hurry; keep him waiting.
7. Pitch high balls to batters who seem anxious to bunt.
8. Try to slip your first pitch through for a strike. Stay ahead of the hitter so you will not have to aim your pitches over the center of the plate.
9. When you have two strikes and no balls on the hitter try to make him hit at a bad pitch—one that is too high or low, inside or outside the plate.
10. With runners on bases, force the batter to hit ground balls by pitching around the knees.
11. Be a real team man; pep up your team mates when they make errors.
12. Warm up well before you pitch.
13. Develop control. Make every pitch count by aiming at a spot.
14. Be relaxed during your wind-up.
15. Be ready to field your position after every pitch. On ground balls hit to your left be ready to cover first base if the first baseman fields the ball.
16. Don't try to field balls unless they are hit or bunted right to you. You may spoil an easy play for the infielders.

III · Catching

While the pitcher, more so than in baseball, is the “key” man of a softball team, good catching is essential to the success even of the club rich in pitching strength. For the man behind the bat, although usually unspectacular and somewhat mechanical in action, is the guiding hand on the field, director of the defense and, most important of all, the man who is handling the pitcher, signaling him what to throw and coddling and encouraging him in the tight spots. It is a very vital part of a catcher’s job to do everything possible to keep his battery-mate from becoming rattled.

Although you seldom see a catcher figuring in a flashy fielding play, he, of all men on the team, must be on his toes, physically and mentally, at all times. He should never receive pitches while in a position so firmly rooted as to hinder cat-like quickness in any move that may be necessary. He should stand as close to the batter as possible, with his feet spread (not too widely) and the left foot placed slightly ahead of the right. That position keeps him ready—ready to move quickly to right or to left as may be necessitated by the pitch, ready to dart forward to retrieve a bunted ball or to wheel in pursuit of a foul fly, ready to snap a throw to any base.

After giving the signal to the pitcher, the catcher’s position should be in a semi-crouch, which offers a better target to the pitcher than if he were standing erect. The mitt (the bulls-eye of the target) should be held waist high and slightly extended.

Inasmuch as the catcher’s deft handling of all pitches is imperative, he should receive them in such a way as to preclude all awkwardness. Thus, pitches above the waist should be caught with fingers pointing upward, pitches below the waist with fingers pointing downward. To reduce the force of the pitch, the catcher should permit the mitt hand to “give” slightly at the moment of impact.

A catcher’s footwork is important. Cat-like agility behind the plate is a wonderful asset; a stumbling catcher not only looks bad but might miss fire at a crucial moment and cause the loss of the game. The

catcher should shift his feet in such a manner as to be in throwing position without loss of time after any play.

Accuracy in throwing is mandatory. It is easily understandable that in softball, with the distance between the bases so small, the minutest fraction of a second counts heavily. Therefore, the catcher's throws to bases must be controlled so that the ball will reach the baseman in the best possible spot to help him tag the runner with the greatest facility. The runner invariably will slide—so that a low throw, say two feet above the ground, will be ideal.

With speed demanded, most catchers use the snap throw instead of the overhand throw, since it is much more quickly dispatched. The catcher's longest throw, to second base, is a distance of only about 77 feet and, by practice, he can learn to whip the ball down there without the waste of precious time entailed by the overhand throw. A quick snap of the wrist can do the trick—and it's a trick that a good catcher must master.

Not the least important of the catcher's duties is to study opposing batsmen to detect their weaknesses. The pitcher may not have a world of stuff or blazing speed, but if the catcher knows what the opposing hitters don't like and can keep his pitcher throwing just that—well, it's obvious that the pitcher is going to be much more effective.

Quite often, of course, the team will be playing against opponents never before encountered. But, even on those occasions it is possible for the catcher to be of great assistance to his battery-mate by making quick observations about the rival batsmen.

For instance, if the batter leans on a fast one, slightly high and a bit on the outside corner, it is obvious that he likes them there. And the next time up it wouldn't be a bad idea to call for an outside pitch, or maybe a curve ball breaking away from the hitter. Then, too, by observing the stance of the batter and how he grips the bat, a catcher can make a pretty good guess as to what sort of pitch he likes best, or least.

The catcher should be the real pepper-pot of the ball club. He should, by his own vigorous spirit, keep his mates on their toes at all times. Much more than mechanically, the man in the mask can be of valuable assistance to his team.

In going after foul flies, the catcher should make certain to toss off his mask with a smooth motion and to toss it away from the direction in which he must run. Getting to the spot where the ball will drop as quickly as possible is the key to success in catching these

high, often straight-up, flies. Never attempt a one-handed catch with the mitt if it is possible to use both hands.

Fielding bunts is another important duty of the catcher. Speed of



PLATE 14. Catching, Mildred Wrenn, Greensboro, N. C.

start is vital in this function, for the runner has had a good start and only fast play will retire him. Use the mitt to help grasp the ball in the throwing hand and make certain, before attempting to throw, that the ball is firmly grasped.

IV · First Base

With the possible exception of the catcher, the first baseman is the greatest "team" man of any player on a softball club. He figures in a large majority of the plays, either actively or in some assisting capacity. He is often the biggest—in most cases, at least, the tallest—man on the team. Usually, too, he is a better-than-average hitter. All these things help him to hold the confidence of his mates—and it is imperative that such be the case.

He should be rather tall, although not necessarily a six-footer. It has been proved that smaller men often make very good first basemen, but the fact remains that unusual height is an asset. Preferably, the first baseman should be a left-hander, but it is not absolutely necessary. A left-hander can throw to the other bases with much greater facility than a right-hander, particularly on ground balls or bunts, and he is in position to get the ball away faster on most plays that come up.

It is of great importance that the first baseman be able to catch throws of any description—high, low, short, or even bounced—but there is a great deal more to playing first base than the comparatively simple job of catching and holding a throw ball. Clumsiness in footwork is a glaring fault at first base and the player who would become efficient at the position must practice and practice until he has acquired the ease and gracefulness of a panther.

The amateur first baseman frequently has uppermost in mind the idea that he must stay on the bag, keep one foot in touch with it practically all of the time in order to be certain that he won't miss out in that single fundamental. This is wrong. Naturally, it is vital to touch the bag when receiving the throw, but that must become a mechanical action, something that's done easily and subconsciously. The good first baseman must move around, shift his position as may be necessary, foresee possible situations and be ready to meet them without stumbling or awkward twisting of the body that invites errors.

He must, then, be agile, sure-footed. Through frequent practice he must learn the art of reaching the inside corner of the bag with a natu-

ral movement of his foot from any position. He must stretch to meet the throw, because in softball every inch counts in the terrific race to get that ball to first before the runner.

It is a good idea for the first baseman to extend his glove, giving the fielder—third baseman, shortstop, second baseman or perhaps the pitcher or catcher—a better target at which to throw. But he must take care not to stretch so far out as to endanger his ability to shift position quickly. The throw may be high, in which case he will have to change his stance for an upward stretch, perhaps even to leap high.

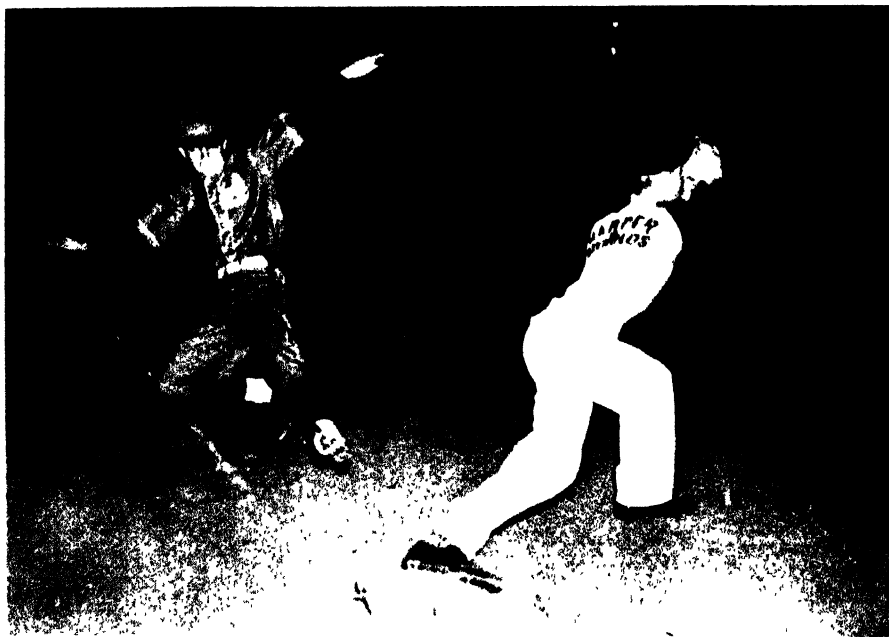


PLATE 15. First Base, Bill Kelly, Los Angeles, First Baseman

Or it may be wide enough to necessitate changing position of his feet.

If the throw is to his right, he should shift to the right with his left toe touching the corner of the base and with his right foot extended out toward right field for the stretch. If the throw is to his left, he must reverse this position.

Whenever possible, the first baseman must endeavor to catch the ball with both hands, since the primary requisite is a sure catch. However, there are occasions when it is impossible to make a two-handed catch and keep touch with the bag, in which instance it is

much better to stretch the gloved hand and attempt the catch with that hand alone. Constant practice will make this play practically as simple as a two-handed catch.

In this connection, however, it must be remembered that an exceptionally wide throw may be too far away even for a one-handed catch. In this case, the baseman must leave the bag quickly in order, at any cost, to make the catch. Good footwork sometimes can save an extra base or even, if the runner is slow, result in a putout at first despite what ordinarily might have been a costly wild throw.

The first baseman quite frequently has a chance to retire the batter even when he fumbles a ball hit in his direction. Even when playing deep for a left-handed batter, the baseman has only a short dash to the bag. In view of this, it is important that the first baseman get his body behind the ball whenever possible. A hard drive may hit his chest or his legs, yet still leave him time for a quick recovery and a putout. There is a tendency among inexperienced players to become flustered immediately after a fumble of a ground ball. This is fatal to a first baseman for he, above all infielders, must keep his head at all times and never be guilty of a foolish throw to another base, which sometimes is the result of a fumble.

He must co-operate closely with the pitcher on balls batted to either position, or between them. If there is any doubt as to whether he or the pitcher should field the ball, the first baseman must call out quickly. On a ball hit to his right, necessitating that he leave the bag uncovered, he must yell to the pitcher to cover and when fielding the ball to be ultra-careful in tossing it over. The pitcher generally has to make the catch on the run and to facilitate this the baseman should make every effort to keep the ball in the pitcher's sight and to time his throw carefully, keeping the ball ahead of the pitcher. This play is one of the neatest in the game and is considerably simpler than it sometimes appears.

On a bunt, a baseman should field the ball, with the pitcher covering the base. This is a play that requires speed and agility and must be practiced often to attain perfection. A mad dash forward to seize a slowly-rolling ball often results in a fumble due to over-anxiety. Never try to throw the ball before you have it.

V · Second Base

The second baseman, popularly known as the guardian of the key-stone sack, doesn't have as varied an assignment as the shortstop, nor does his position entail such long throws. But he must be a sure fielder of ground balls and must be capable of covering the base with grace and assurance on every type of play.

A valuable tip to the baseman in fielding ground balls is the reminder to keep the palm of the gloved hand facing the ball as it approaches. Turning the glove to present its edge to the ball is a fault that often leads to errors, permitting the ball to trickle through. Whenever possible, the fielder should get his body in front of the ball, without assuming a position so awkward as to interfere with an easy throw.

It is important that the second baseman determine *before* the play to what base he is going to throw. Then, if the throw is to second base, he can facilitate pivoting toward that base and if to first base he can be prepared to snap it over to the first baseman with almost the same motion as he fields the ball.

However, the second baseman should be more accurate than hasty in throwing to first, since on most plays he will have ample time to toss out the runner without feverish haste. The main idea is to field the ball cleanly and to make an accurate throw.

He must not "fight" the ball. Ground balls should be trapped near the ground or fielded at the height of the bounce. Avoid taking the ball on the long up-hop unless absolutely necessary. On a slow-bounding ball, the fielder must come in fast and sometimes will find it necessary to field the ball and throw with the same motion. If the ball be hit sharply, it is never advisable to dash in, unless the play be at the plate. Cutting off a run can be the difference between winning or losing the game and therefore is important enough to make taking a chance, even a long chance, worth while.

Since the second baseman frequently has time to recover a fumbled ball and still make the putout at first, he should practice retrieving it. He should pick it up with the throwing hand, to avoid loss of time entailed by recovering with the gloved hand and then transferring

the ball to the throwing hand. Keep your eyes on the ball at all times.

Ease in catching fly balls helps considerably, for the tensed fielder is much more liable to err than the fielder whose muscles are free and relaxed. Get there fast and keep the hands extended toward the ball, well out in front of the eyes. When fielding a fly ball not definitely in his own territory, the fielder should call out, asserting his intentions so that other fielders will not run into him.

The simple expedient of letting the runner tag himself can save a lot of difficulty for the second baseman in covering the bag. If he straddles the base, catches the ball and holds it in his gloved hand near the ground in front of the base, the runner has to slide into it. If the throw is high, the baseman must catch it and bring it down with the same motion. Plays on attempted steals are invariably close and every split second counts. Don't reach for the runner—he has to tag the base and if your gloved hand, holding the ball, is there, he'll tag himself.

One of the most exciting plays is that in which a base-runner is caught between bases. He never should be permitted to escape and good fielding will always retire him. The baseman, taking a throw when a runner is trapped, should move fast toward the runner, driving him back toward the other base. Timing the throw is important and bluffing helps. The runner, not the fielder, should be confused. Don't waste throws. Chase the runner until he has to attempt to return to the other base and then throw. On this play a high throw often is necessary. Avoid hitting the runner with the ball at all costs.

Since double plays in softball require more speed and precision than in baseball, this is a vital duty of the second baseman. He must remember, however, that retiring one runner is important—the attempted double play that gets nobody out is usually the result of poor judgment.

On a ball that is not hit hard, the chances of retiring two men are negligible, unless the batter be a very slow runner. Therefore, the throw should be to the shortstop covering second base to retire the runner nearest home. However, sometimes a fast base-runner will be off quickly and almost down to second by the time the ball is fielded. In this instance, the throw to second will be too late to get him and, in addition, will enable the batter to make first safely.

In the event of a ball hit to the left side of the diamond with a runner on first, the second baseman should waste no time getting over to the bag to cover on a possible double play. In receiving the throw, he

should take the ball a step away from the bag, so that he can move toward first base (in the direction of his own throw) and touch the bag simultaneously. At the same time, he is in position to avoid the runner going into second.



PLATE 16. Second Base. Hank Kremble, Kodak's Second Baseman

On balls hit close to the base, it is sometimes best to tag second and then make the throw to first without assistance of the shortstop. However, since this entails a slight waste of time in turning to make the throw, often it is advisable to make a short under-hand flip to the shortstop, who can then relay the ball to first more easily.

VI · Third Base

Third base is the “hot corner” in baseball and it’s almost as “hot” in softball. While batted balls haven’t quite the terrific speed as in baseball, they zip down the third-base line almost as fast—and the distance to the batter’s box is considerably less.

With a long throw to first, the third baseman must be equipped with a strong and accurate arm. Sometimes he has plenty of time to get the ball over to first but often, on a difficult chance, he must make the throw while off balance. His arm, therefore, must be equal to any occasion.

Compared to the shortstop and second baseman, the third sacker has comparatively few chances but he faces a wider variety of batted balls. In addition to the torrid smashes driven in his direction, he frequently must come in fast to handle a bunt or a “swinging bunt”—a topped ground ball—and while speed is not of paramount importance in the making of a first class guardian of the hot corner, it helps.

He should get off his throw with as little loss of time as possible, i.e., practice snapping the ball to first base instead of using the slower overhand toss. The underhand wrist snap is particularly important on slow-hit balls, which require a throw started with almost the same motion as in fielding the ball.

The unnecessary throw should be avoided. Sometimes, after knocking down or momentarily fumbling a hard chance, the third baseman may still get the ball to first in time to retire the batter. But when it is obvious that he has no chance, he should be content to hold up the throw. A hurried heave, particularly after a fumble, often results in an extra base for the runner.

Fly ball chances are few for the third baseman, other than line drives, very short pop-ups, or foul pops. It is usually advisable for the shortstop to handle Texas Leaguers, since he is in a much better position to judge them and get under them. The third baseman, however, should take pop-flies in the immediate vicinity of the pitcher’s box.

He must be a heady player, capable of making a quick diagnosis of plays and acting fast. He must remember the situation at all times—

number of outs, the score, the inning, the base-runners and the batter. He should know what his pitcher is throwing, because the type of pitch will guide him in just where to play the hitter.

He should be on the alert for a bunt, especially with a man on first base and less than two out. A quick start is necessary, so the third baseman should play on his toes, alert and "loose." In softball it seldom is possible to retire the runner at second base after a bunted ball and the play should not be attempted unless the fielder is certain of success. It is far better to permit the sacrifice and get the man at first than to make a foolish throw that will retire neither runner.

With men on first and second, or with a man on second and first unoccupied, the baseman may be obliged to cover third instead of fielding the bunt. He should have prearranged signals with the pitcher and the catcher in this situation in order to avoid confusion of assignments.

Like the second baseman or the shortstop, the third sacker should straddle his base when covering and lower the ball promptly in his gloved hand to make the runner tag himself.

He should also act quickly in backing up second base when the shortstop covers on a ball hit to right field, leaving the pitcher to cover third. In receiving outfield throws at third base, the baseman should concentrate on the ball, which sometimes will bounce in front of him, ignoring the runner. Many times basemen have concentrated on tagging the runner—before they have the ball.

Like the second baseman, the third sacker should face the palm of his glove to the bounding ball and get his body in front of it, so that he'll stop it somehow. Many a third baseman has made stops with his shins or his chest and still had time to get his man at first.

VII · Shortstop

As in baseball, the softball shortstop covers a lot of territory and must participate in a wide variety of plays. Since the majority of batsmen are right-handed, the shortstop will figure in most of the plays on ground balls. He must be a sure fielder and must possess a good arm.

It is undoubtedly the toughest infield position. The shortstop must field fast- or slow-hopping grounders, take short flies behind him if he figures they're out of the outfielder's reach, and must make throws from almost every angle. Hence, he must be a fast thinker and it is necessary that he anticipate plays; that is, take in every situation quickly and automatically get himself set for any eventuality.

The fielding principles are much the same for the shortstop as for the second baseman, except that in most instances he has less time to get off his throw, since often he will field balls in the deep position requiring a speedy and quickly-delivered throw to beat the runner to first. He must practice fielding the ball and getting off his throw with one smooth, continuous motion.

He should assume a natural, relaxed position, bent slightly at the knees and hips and leaning forward just a trifle with his weight on the balls of his feet. In this way, with his feet approximately eighteen inches apart, he is ready to shift quickly in any direction. He should practice the art of letting his hands "give" slightly at the moment of impact when fielding a ball. This will enable him to have complete control of the ball without danger of "fighting" it and a probable resultant error.

Teamwork with the second baseman is particularly important, since the two players actually form a partnership in covering second base and the territory surrounding it and they must function smoothly together.

In making double plays, the shortstop's duties are slightly different from those of the second baseman. Fielding a ball hit to his left, the shortstop quite often will find it a simpler and time-saving method to continue running in that direction to touch second base and make his

throw to first with the same motion. When he is not headed that way, however, a short, accurate flip—made with an underhand motion—to the second baseman will speed the play.

The shortstop receiving a throw from the second baseman on a double play attempt should watch the position of the runner heading into the bag. If he is coming to the base on the inside, the fielder should touch the bag with his right foot and take one more step, then throw. If the runner is coming in on the outside, the shortstop should take a backward step before throwing. Interference with the runner has ruined more than one golden opportunity for a two-ply killing.

He should be ready to hold up his throw, since the batter may be safely down to first before the play can be completed and a wasted throw may mean an error and extra bases. The shortstop, above all infielders, should look before he leaps, which is to say that very often it is far the wiser course not to throw at all than to make a hurried heave to a base that may not even be covered. Because another player is supposed to be there is no reason for hasty action that might result disastrously.

In these plays, and all plays which require covering the base in addition to fielding batted balls, timing is a prime requisite. Constant practice will develop ease and sureness.

The shortstop, in endeavoring to place himself in the best possible position, should take the batter's strength and peculiarities into consideration, along with his own throwing ability. When the situation permits him to play deep, he should protect his weak side. He should play wide toward the barehand side, since it is easier to cover ground toward the gloved hand.

He must remember to cover second base when a bunt is expected and in various circumstances he will be required to cover third base, also. Naturally, the shortstop must be a good rover, fast and quick-thinking—the good shortstop always is at the right place at the right time.

VIII · Outfield Play

The softball outfielder must be alert every instant of the time he is patrolling his position. While he gets much less chance to take the spotlight than the pitcher or the catcher, who are active on every pitch, or the infielders, who figure in many more plays on ground balls, pop-fies, and covering the bases, the outfielder may not infrequently be the man in whose hands the fate of the team rests. A fraction of a second's lapse on his part may mean the loss of the game.

And that is why really good outfielders—defensively speaking—are rare. It is a trying task to maintain a physical and mental state of razor-sharp keenness, particularly when two or three innings may pass with the outfielder having nothing to do but to be ready. Physical inactivity tends to reduce the mental awareness and it is often the case that the outfielder, after waiting patiently for a chance to figure actively in the ball game, loses his mental readiness inopportunistically. Just when he has resigned himself to the role of interested bystander, a heavy hitter will connect and drive the ball somewhere in his territory. Momentarily, he has been caught off guard. He reacts quickly, races after the ball and, reaching out while running at top speed, just fails to grasp it.

That fraction of a second that it took him to adjust himself to the quick change in his station might have meant winning or losing the game. An extra-base hit, particularly in a close, low-score game, often is the deciding factor. And, more often than not, the difference between a three-bagger and a catch in the outfield is merely a matter of the smallest fraction of a second.

There used to be an old ball-player's saying that the outfielders "ought to be made to pay their way into the park." But the outfielder who doesn't take his duties with the utmost seriousness will not be a good outfielder.

The good outfielder doesn't wait until he sees the ball heading toward him to swing into action. He's "off with the pitch"—meaning that he has been on his toes from the moment the ball left the pitcher's hand and he's ready for anything. The good outfielder instinctively

knows the instant the ball is hit approximately where it will fall. It is imperative that he reach that spot in the quickest possible time. Therefore, his stance and start mean everything.

He should assume a slightly crouched position with legs well spread and his weight distributed evenly on the balls of his feet, so that he can start immediately in any direction. He should pivot on the foot in the direction he wishes to take when the ball is hit; i.e., if the ball is hit to his left, he should pivot on his left foot and make the first step with his right foot, and vice versa. In the event the ball is hit over his head, he must pivot on the far foot and take his first step with the foot nearest the direction of the ball.

He should run on his toes, as this lessens the jar and interferes less with following the flight of the ball. The arms should swing in sprint form in half-bent position at the side and not be extended toward the ball until the very last moment.

Many a ball game has been lost because of confusion—and sometimes physical injury resulting from collisions—on the part of outfielders when a ball has been hit between them. It is therefore wise for the outfielder about to make the catch to shout: "I have it." His team mate should answer, "Take it."

Getting under the ball quickly is important and considerably lessens the danger of error. With a quick start on a high fly, the outfielder should have no trouble reaching the right spot and being there awaiting the descent of the ball. He can thus get himself all set, ready to make the return throw to the infield with the least possible loss of time.

When possible in receiving the ball the outfielder's hands should be in front of his face, arms extended and relaxed, with palms turned up and little fingers together, forming a cup. There should be a slight "give" with the catch, with the player keeping his eye on the ball as long as possible. Of course, the position of the hands depends upon the height of the ball when caught. If below the waist, the hands should be cupped with palms out and at the moment of impact the ball should be "squeezed" slightly.

Running backward after a ball hit over the head of the outfielder should be avoided. The fielder must practice the art of judging the ball with split-second accuracy, so that he can turn his back and race to the point where he judges it will fall or he will reach it. The more adept an outfielder becomes at going back for the ball, the further in he may play. The advantage of playing closer to the infield is obvious. Many a Texas Leaguer or hump-backed liner that otherwise would

fall safely has been gobbled up by a speedy outfielder who didn't have to play too far out.

Occasionally an outfielder may find it necessary to make a diving catch. This, however, should not be attempted under certain conditions. For instance, in a close game with nobody on base, an outfielder should not try a shoe-string catch on a line drive. A miss might mean a three-bagger or a home-run, whereas by playing it safely, taking the ball on the hop, the fielder can hold the batter to a single. On the other hand, with the potential tying or winning run on second base, the outfielder may elect to try for the catch, provided he has a real chance of success, for a base-hit probably would score the run anyway.

An outfielder should not hesitate after making a catch or fielding a ground ball. It is necessary that he return the ball to the infield immediately. Therefore, he should make up his mind just what he is going to do *before* each play, so that if the ball comes to him he can act without loss of precious seconds.

IX · Batting

The key to success in batting is practice. Strange it is that softball players will spend hours shagging flies and fielding grounders and practicing throws—and then wind up the session with two or three swings at balls lobbed up by a pitcher who is trying only to put it where they can hit it.

Like any other team game, softball has two basic functions—offense and defense. And the natural assumption is that they are of equal importance. Why, then, shouldn't as much time be devoted to offensive drilling as to defensive preparation? The softball team spends half of its time in the field and the other half at bat. And no matter how strong its defense, the team that cannot manufacture runs will not win many games.

The offense is divided into two parts—base-running, discussed in a later chapter, and batting. Base-running is important, but before a batter becomes a base-runner he must hit the ball, unless, of course, he be granted a base on balls.

The batting stance varies according to the hitter, naturally, but there is one important thing to remember when you step up to the plate and await the offerings of the man in the pitcher's box: Be at ease. Over-tenseness or any awkwardness will handicap the hitter. He should be "loose" in movement, ready to take a free "cut" at the ball.

Some good batters advise a position about a foot or so away from the plate, with the left foot (for a right-handed batter) forward to guide the swing and the right foot in the rear as a pivot. The bat should be held firmly, but not too tightly, for tensing the muscles will ruin the timing of the swing.

The batter should be ready to swing once he takes up his position in the batter's box. Some hitters move the bat incessantly while awaiting the pitcher's delivery. Others hold it still. This isn't important, so long as the batter is relaxed and ready.

He should strive to meet the ball *in front* of his body and follow through with his swing. The full power of the swing cannot be capitalized if the batter fails to get the bat in front of his body at the mo-

ment of impact with the ball. In that way he can get the advantage of a full wrist snap and follow-through and watch the ball more easily.

Hitting off the heels is a bad fault, resulting from the batter's attempting to reach out for the ball after drawing his hips back away from the plate and shifting his weight to his heels. There is little force



PLATE 17. Batting—Correct Stance, Ray Bartlett

behind a swing made in this manner and it can result in a safe hit only by good fortune. Never lunge at the ball.

In selecting a bat the player should choose one he can handle without strain, but this does not necessarily mean the lighter the bat, the better. On the contrary, the bat that is too light cannot help to furnish

the power needed for long hitting. The batter should pick a balanced war-club, one with enough weight in the end to furnish something approaching the whip-like snap achieved in swinging a golf club.

Never try to outguess the pitcher. Guess-hitting sometimes works



PLATE 18. Batting—End of Swing

in baseball but in softball, with the pitching distance only forty-three feet, there is too much chance of a wrong guess. If the batter believes a curve ball is coming and prepares his swing accordingly, he will have absolutely no chance should the pitcher zip in a fast one.

Timing must be exact. A long stride is not necessary to get power into the swing and, in fact, is a fault which must be overcome. The long stride causes lowering of the shoulders and the arm and interferes with the plane of vision. A short stride, keeping the batter balanced in stance and ready to apply the power by meeting the ball in front of his body, brings results.

Too long a stride also necessarily means that the batter will be off balance after hitting the ball and he will lose valuable time in getting started on the way to first base.

The swing of the bat should describe a flat arc parallel with the ground. The wrist swing is the most natural and easiest to guide accurately. The elbows must be kept away from the body, well out in front of it. The bat should be held even with the shoulder and the swing, while executed with power, not too vicious, so as to interfere with the timing. Above all, the batter should keep his eyes on the ball until the last possible instant.

A special art in softball is bounce-hitting, i.e., hitting down at the pitch so that the ball bounces high, permitting the runner enough time to beat it out for a hit. This is advised only for good hitters and should not be attempted against fast-ball pitching. It requires perfect timing and unusual skill in batting.

Bunting, however, should be mastered by all batters, *especially* the weaker hitters. With a runner or runners on base and less than two outs, it is up to the weak hitter to advance him or them and if he cannot bunt his value to his team is considerably lessened.

On a sacrifice bunt, the batter should change his position just as the ball is about to be delivered, shifting his feet to face the ball squarely and leaning slightly forward in a semi-crouch. He should hold the bat out in front of his body, parallel with the ground, and should hold it lightly, one hand grasping the handle loosely near the end and the other holding the center of the bat near the trademark with fingers behind for protection.

The secret in bunting is to deaden the speed of the pitch by permitting the ball to strike the bat as it is held loosely in the hands. No attempt is made to strike at the ball, nor to pull away from it. The loose grip will serve to deaden the ball. Keep the elbows slightly flexed to assist in getting the "dead" effect.

As soon as he lays down the bunt, the batter should be off for first base. With men on first and second and none out, the bunt should be

directed toward third base, making the third baseman field it to leave the bag uncovered. With a man on first, the bunt may be directed toward the first baseman, the pitcher or the third baseman, but in



PLATE 19. Batting, Margaret Williams, Charlotte, N. C.

most cases the batter can get off to a quicker start by dropping the bunt near the first-base line.

Bunting for base-hits often is a particularly effective method of at-

tack. However, "spots" should be picked for this move and the batter should be a fast man. A well-placed bunt, especially if the infield is playing back, often will result in a safety. Sometimes, too, the opposing pitcher has shown himself to be an uncertain fielder and in this case bunting may cause him to throw his own game away.

A final word about batting: Remember that a base on balls is as good as a hit, and sometimes even more effective. Never hit at a bad ball unless the bunt or hit-and-run sign is on.

X · Base-Running

It is obvious that, since the scoring of runs is the primary objective of the game, base-running is an important phase of softball. In the better leagues, scoring is light and those runs are precious. Each man who reaches base is a potential run and he should be capable of making the most of any opportunity to advance.

Speed is the chief factor but it must be quick-starting speed, because the distance between bases is so small. The base-runner must think quickly and when he makes up his mind to "go," he must not hesitate.

When the batter hits a fair ball, he becomes a base-runner and, even though it looks like an easy chance for the fielder, he should run it out at full speed. Anything can happen in softball and the team that gets the "breaks" usually is the team that makes them.

The softball base-runner is not permitted to "take a lead" as in baseball. Don't try to fool the umpire by beating the pitch. It's an automatic out if you do and it's a sharp practice that should be avoided. Be on your toes and if you're "going down" on a pitch, make certain that the ball has left the pitcher's hand, then dig in.

Sliding to bases is an art that is little appreciated yet of considerable importance. There are two reasons for sliding—to evade the baseman and to stop without slowing up sooner than necessary.

The hook, or fallaway, slide is executed by throwing the body away from the baseman and "hooking" the bag with the left instep as the slide is made to the right of the base. Of course, the technique is reversed if sliding to the left. On a straight-in slide one leg should be bent at the knee with the calf under the calf of the other leg. If the leg underneath is drawn up on contact with the bag, the runner may rise immediately to a running position. The advantage of the hook slide is obvious—the baseman has only the foot to tag.

Although pulling the unexpected sometimes brings good results, there are pretty definite rules on when to attempt base-stealing. There must be a definite advantage in gaining the extra base, otherwise the risk is not worth it.

Stealing second is usually attempted with two outs. A hit will score

a runner from second but it will take an extra-base wallop to score him from first. And with two outs, the advantage of a successful steal is worth the risk, particularly in a close game.

Since a man can score from third on an infield out, a long fly, an error or on a squeeze play, the best time to steal that base is with one out. Attempting to steal third with two outs is not to be recom-



PLATE 20. Sliding. Burren Simmons. Los Angeles

mended, since the runner cannot materially better his position. A hit is necessary to score him from third, and a hit probably would score him from second, too.

Don't try to steal home except under the most extraordinary circumstances. Never with less than two out.

The double steal requires neat teamwork on the part of the runners. It is usually attempted with men on first and second or first and third. With runners on first and second, both men start fast with the pitch. In a close game, this strategy often works.

With runners on first and third, the man on first starts with the pitch but watches the catcher. If he sees he can beat the throw to

second, or if the catcher is hesitating to throw, he should go all the way and slide. If the catcher throws and he (the runner) finds the chances are he'll be put out at second, he should stop and get himself trapped in a "run-down," thus setting the stage for the man on third to break for home.

The base-runner should be alert at all times. He should know the situation as to outs, score and inning and he should always know who has the ball. Good base-running has won more than one close game.

XI · Team Play

In any team game, co-ordination of the various parts which make up the team is necessary to achieve success. Individual stardom is bound to come to a few outstanding players and if they are willing to work whole-heartedly for the good of the team, their value is doubled.

Due to the natural advantage resting with the pitcher, the hit-and-run, one of baseball's neatest bits of teamwork on the offense, is not prominent in softball. It is used, and sometimes with devastating effect, but the chances of working it successfully against good pitching are comparatively small.

The softball batter must be given somewhat free rein at the plate, because against a good pitcher he'll have his hands full without trying to hit to a certain field or to hit a certain pitch.

Bunting and base-stealing are the major factors in softball team play. The sacrifice bunt is used to advance runners from first to second and from second to third, in addition to the run-scoring (if successful) squeeze play. Sacrifice bunting and base-stealing are closely allied, since in each there must be co-operation between base-runner and batter.

For all team plays there must be signals and the more simple the signals the less chance that they will be missed. The manager, naturally, is the man to give the signals and he should flash them to the third-base coach—or, better still, he should coach at third base and give them from there.

The signals may be almost any natural movement, such as touching the cap, folding the arms, rubbing or clapping the hands, etc. It should be understood when a signal is given that the play will be attempted on the next pitch.

Even the simplest system of signals requires practice, for it is obvious that missing the signs might well result disastrously. Some softball clubs have no real code for team play, but do their base-stealing and bunting individually at the discretion of the player. However, it may be seen that the advantage of team play lies in co-operation on

the part of the whole team. Often a close game can be won by skillful application of a little teamwork.

The squeeze play is usually made with runner on third base and one out, although it has been worked successfully with none out. The play may be attempted with the runner dashing for home with the pitch or waiting for the batter to pick out a good ball to bunt.

The latter method is safer, i.e., it eliminates the danger of the runner's being put out, should the batter miss fire in his bunting attempt. But the running squeeze, with the base-runner going with the pitch, is more spectacular and quite often more effective.

With the runner dashing for home, obviously the batter must bunt that particular pitch, for if he misses the runner probably will be put out. On the other hand, if he can bunt the ball safely on the ground, the play is sure to work and the chances are good that the throw will be made to the plate, giving the batter a life at first base.

The hit-and-run should be used sparingly. The ideal situation for this play is with a good hitter up and a fast man on first base. The batter attempts to hit a ground ball behind the runner to right field, through the opening left by the second baseman as he runs over to cover the bag. The base-runner, upon getting the sign that the play is "on" for the next pitch, digs in for second. He has two chances of success, for even should the batter miss his swing, the runner may steal successfully. A successful hit behind the runner certainly will move him to third and may score him.

XII · The Game for Women

Women play baseball—after a fashion. Few play it well. The “hardball” game is a man’s sport and although members of the fair sex have tried it since ’way back when and there are teams of women players who still tour the country for exhibition games against men teams, their chief stock in trade is novelty. It is decidedly unusual for a girl to be skilled in this sport.

But softball is different. While demanding skill and speed, it is less taxing physically; i.e., it is less on the brawny side than the game from which it was patterned. Women can play softball well. And the last few years have seen girls’ teams spring up all over the country.

These teams do not have to depend upon the natural attractiveness of the fair sex in sports to command attention. They have something more than grace and beauty to interest spectators. They have mastered the game itself and some of them play it well enough to compare favorably with many men’s teams.

There are several basic reasons for this.

In the first place, the softball bat is not the wagon-tongue which baseball’s mighty hitters wield with such terrifying force. A girl, even a girl who is not built along the general lines of a horse, can handle it easily, can control it without the undue exertion which would ruin timing. Of course, long-distance hitting is exceptional in women’s softball, but there are always those husky femmes who possess enough of the male brawn to match the feats of the men sluggers.

Then there’s the ball. The softball is not soft, of course. But the pitcher can’t throw it with quite the blinding speed of a Bob Feller or a Lefty Grove; it won’t streak from the bat with the terrific force characteristic of the line drive hits of baseball’s big guns. Which means, naturally, that there is considerably less physical danger.

The difference in the size of the playing field also helps immeasurably in making the game suitable for women. In baseball the long throws from third base to first, from home-plate to second base and from the outfield to the plate are far too much for the average girl

athlete. They demand power—and the fair sex is not naturally powerful, that is, physically.

Further, the smaller playing field is important on the batting side. Few girls batters can drive a baseball past the outfielders. In the first place, only the huskier lassies can wield the baseball bat with any marked proficiency. And in the second place, even those who can

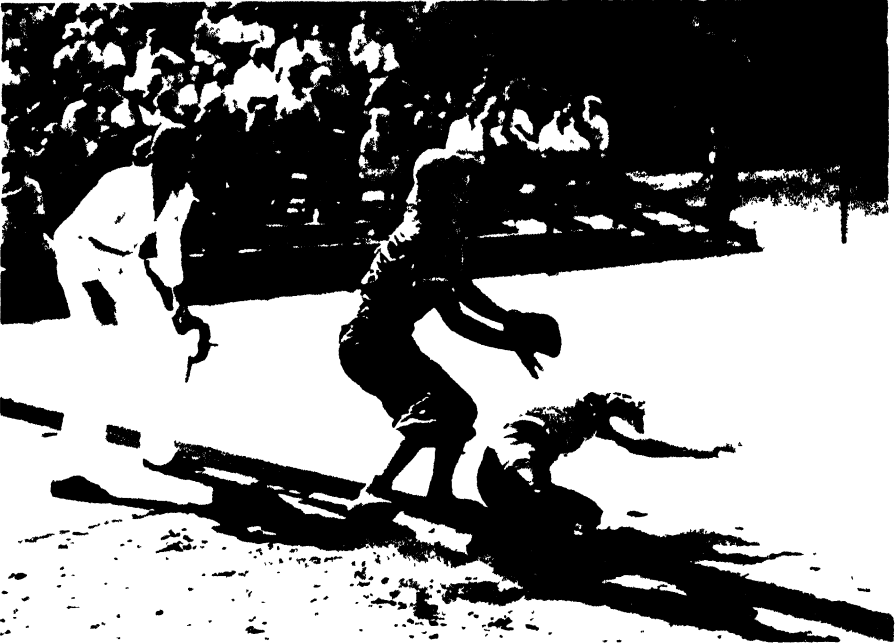


PLATE 21. Girls' Game, Lansing, Michigan

swing it and keep it under control haven't the physical strength required for long-distance swatting.

But in softball the outfielders don't play so far out. The key to successful batting is timing. And even women batters can master it sufficiently to come through occasionally with those lusty drives that go for extra bases.

Then there's the matter of playing equipment. Softball players don't have to be attired in full war regalia such as is necessary in baseball. The game is less hazardous and, accordingly, requires less protective apparel.

So, all in all, while baseball is a man's game, softball is by no means fashioned only for males. Women not only play it well, they add grace

and charm to a sport that is rapidly gaining popularity to surpass any other American game.

More and more, the girls are claiming the spotlight in the major softball tournaments. Far from an unhappy trend, this is indeed a development to be hailed with delight. And more and more thousands are enjoying this splendid game every year.

XIII · The Game Under Lights

Incandescence has come to softball and, unlike its effect on so many other sports, it has served to speed the impetus of softball's surprisingly steady rise in national favor. For softball is one game which thrives after dark; in fact, if anything, the sport under the arc lights is more enjoyable than in the rays of the sun.

Back in the days of softball's infancy, it was primarily a recreational activity. It required less time to play than baseball; it was far less expensive; often a ball and bat were all that two teams needed in the way of equipment to get a game going for complete enjoyment.

It appeared to be the ideal game for that hour or so after supper, before darkness descended to chase the fun-lovers indoors. Twilight softball gained popularity by leaps and bounds. The not-so-athletically inclined found that they could play it, after a fashion, and get a lot of fun out of it. The factory workers and the office workers thrived on it. Every bit of flat surface that could be turned into softball diamonds was gobbled up by the softballers. Games often got under way with the players still munching on their dessert and continued until fading light made play no longer enjoyable.

Meanwhile, the chaff began to be separated from the wheat, speaking in terms of proficiency at the game. The better players began to take this new sport seriously. Leagues were formed and the game assumed attractiveness as a spectator sport.

And then night softball came into being.

Softballers found the arc light game ideal. The playing field wasn't large enough to make good lighting as expensive or as difficult as in other sports. Modern floodlighting excellence made the game easier to play and to watch than daytime sport. In fact, in night softball the uniform lighting has proved a distinct advantage. From start to finish of a game, the light never varies, which means that the contestants are not bothered by the daytime change from glaring sunlight to dark shadows. The big headache of the twilight game—the question, often resulting in disputes marring good sport, of when to stop a long contest or an extra-inning affair—was gone. There always was

light enough to continue. Games went to decision, regardless of the time it took to play them out, and they were finished under exactly the same lighting conditions as existed when they started.

It no longer was necessary for athletes, finishing their day's work, to rush home for a quick meal, get ready and hurry out to the field for all-too-short practice before a twilight game got under way.

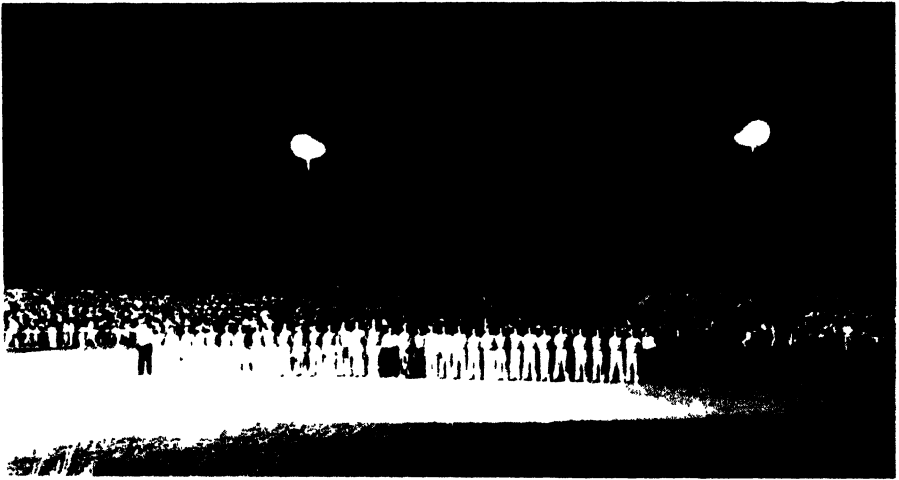


PLATE 22 Night Softball at Miami, Florida

And for the spectator, too, the game took on a new attractiveness. He didn't have to rush matters, pass up his own after-supper activity in order to see his favorite softball team in action. He had plenty of time, after returning from his day's labors, to enjoy his evening repast, spend an hour or so in outdoor recreation and then go to the softball field to enjoy a good game played under ideal conditions by two good teams.

Fans can enjoy night games more because they can follow the ball and the action more easily than in daylight. Every move of the players is made in full view of the spectators, for there is no hiding in the shadows when the modern mazdas flood the field with light.

The players, too, find general conditions more satisfactory. Batters will tell you that they can judge the pitched ball more accurately, they can see it every inch of the way from the pitcher's box to home plate. Fielders find accuracy in judging batted balls aided by the uniform lighting of the night game.

All of which has done something of paramount importance to the

softball sport. The expense of equipping a ball park with a lighting system has become negligible in view of the tremendous response of the spectators. Professional teams have found it far more advisable to invest in floodlights and draw thousands of paying fans than to play twilight games for the entertainment of a few hundred fans who choose to pass up their own recreation to see how the experts do it.

During the past few years night softball has risen to a place of particular prominence on the American sports calendar. There is no reason to fear any sort of let-down. On the contrary, cognizant of the advantages of the floodlight sport and the natural growth of the game itself, there is every reason to predict that it will become more and more important every year.

Night softball has come to stay.

XIV · Official Rules of Softball

APPROVED AS OFFICIAL BY THE JOINT RULES COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS

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OFFICIAL DIMENSIONS OF SOFTBALL DIAMONDS
Prepared by Joint Rules Committee
on Softball

Official Rules of Softball for 1947*

APPROVED AS OFFICIAL BY THE JOINT RULES COMMITTEE ON SOFTBALL

Rule 1—THE DIAMOND

The official diamond shall have 55 foot base lines, with a pitching distance of 43 feet, and other details as shown in the accompanying diagrams. For girls' play the official pitching distance shall be 35 feet.

Rule 2—LAYING OUT DIAMOND

Determine the position of the home plate. Draw a line in the direction it is desired to lay the diamond. Drive a stake at the corner of home plate nearest the catcher. Fasten a cord to this stake and tie knots, or otherwise mark the cord, at 43 feet, 55 feet, 77 feet $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches and at 110 feet.

Place the cord (without stretching) along the direction line and at the 43 foot mark place a stake—this will be the front line at the middle of the pitcher's plate. Along the same line drive a stake at 77 feet $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches—this will be the center of second base.

Place the 110 foot marker at the center of second base and taking hold of the cord at the 55 foot marker, walk to the right of the direction line until the cord is taut (but not stretched) and drive a stake at the 55 foot marker—this will be the outside corner of first base, and the cord will now form the lines to first and second bases. Again holding the cord at the 55 foot marker, walk across the field and in like manner mark the outside corner of third base. Home plate, first and third bases are wholly inside the diamond.

To check the diamond, place the home plate end of the cord at the first base stake and the 110 foot marker at third base. The 55 foot marker should now check at home plate and second base.

Check all distances with a steel tape whenever possible.

THE THREE-FOOT LINE. Starting at a point half way between home plate and first base and three feet outside the base line, draw a line parallel to and three feet from the base line to a point 10 feet beyond first base.

THE BATTER'S BOX. The batter's box (one on each side of home plate) shall measure 3 x 7 feet. The inside line of the batter's box shall be 6 inches from home plate. The front line of the batter's box shall be 4 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate, and the back line shall be 3 feet back of the center of home plate.

THE CATCHER'S BOX. The catcher's box shall be 10 feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batter's boxes and shall be 8 feet 5 inches in width.

THE COACHER'S BOX. Starting at a point outside the diamond at first and third bases, lines 15 feet in length shall be drawn toward the home plate, parallel to and 6 feet from the base-lines.

* No changes were made for 1947 in Rules adopted for 1946

Rule 3—EQUIPMENT

SECTION 1. The bat shall be round, made of hard wood, and shall be of only one piece, not more than 34 inches in length and not more than $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches in diameter at its largest part, and shall be marked "Official Softball Bat" to indicate that it conforms to the specifications regarding length and size.

Note: A tolerance of $\frac{1}{16}$ inch is permitted to allow for expansion.

The bat shall have a safety grip of cork, tape or composition material. Such safety grip shall be not less than 10 inches in length and shall extend not more than 15 inches from the small end of the bat.

SEC. 2. The official softball shall be a regular, smooth-seam concealed stitch or flat surfaced ball of any type.

Condensed specifications: Three to four ounces finest No. 1 quality Long Fibre Kapok compressed, hand or machine wrapped with fine quality twisted yarn, and covered with Latex or rubber cement. Cover of finest quality No. 1 Chrome Tanned Horse or Cow Hide with no imperfections, cemented to the ball by application of cement to underside of cover and sewed with Waxed Thread of Cotton or Linen.

The finished ball shall be not less than $11\frac{7}{8}$ inches nor more than $12\frac{1}{8}$ inches in circumference, and shall weigh not less than 6 ounces nor more than $6\frac{3}{4}$ ounces. Raised out-seam balls are illegal.

SEC. 3. The home plate shall be made of rubber, or other suitable material, and shall be a five sided figure 17 inches wide across the center and 17 inches across the edge facing the pitcher; the sides shall be parallel to the inside lines of the batter's boxes and shall be $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length; the sides of the point facing the catcher shall be 12 inches in length.

SEC. 4. (a) The pitcher's plate shall be of wood or rubber, 24 inches long and 6 inches in width. The front line of the pitcher's plate shall be 43 feet from the outside corner of the home plate and the top of the pitcher's plate shall be level with the ground.

(b) For girls' play the official pitching distance shall be 35 feet.

SEC. 5. The bases, other than home plate, shall be 15 inches square and shall be made of canvas or other suitable material. Bases should be securely fastened in position. See Rule 28, Sec. 9, and Note to Rule 29.

SEC. 6. Gloves may be worn by any player, but mitts may be used only by the catcher and first baseman. No top lacing, webbing or other device between the thumb and body of a glove or mitt worn by a first baseman or other fielder shall be more than 4 inches in length.

Masks must be worn by catchers, and women catchers must wear both masks and body protectors. (This part of the rule may be modified by local regulation, for intermediate and junior classes.)

SEC. 7. A shoe shall be considered official in Softball games if it is: (a) Made with either canvas or leather uppers or similar material; of rubber soles with or without soft rubber cleats; (b) Made with uppers of leather or similar material with hard rubber cleats extending not over $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch from the sole of the shoe; (c) Made with uppers of leather or similar material

with metal spikes, providing the spike has blunt edges all around, and does not extend more than $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch from the sole of the shoe.

Track or any sharp spikes are illegal and will be barred.

SEC. 8. All visible parts of the uniform and accessories worn by the pitcher shall be the same dark blue or black color, with no lettering or trimming on the front of the uniform.

Note: Stationing of other fielders in light uniforms back of the pitcher to destroy the effectiveness of this rule shall not be permitted.

Note: Women's uniforms—As a precaution against injury and infection, it is recommended that women and girl players wear knickers, slacks or full length trousers.

Rule 4—TEAMS, PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

SECTION 1. A team shall consist of Nine (9) players, whose positions shall be designated as follows: Catcher, Pitcher, First Baseman, Second Baseman, Third Baseman, Shortstop, Left Fielder, Center Fielder and Right Fielder. Players of the team in the field may be stationed at any points on fair ground which their captain may elect, except that the pitcher, while in the act of delivering the ball to the batsman, must take his position as defined in Rule 8 and the catcher must be within the lines of his position.

SEC. 2. No team shall be permitted to start or to continue a game with less than NINE players, and each side shall have sufficient substitutes to carry out the provisions of this section.

SEC. 3. A substitute may take the place of a player whose name is in his team's batting order, but the player for whom he is substituted shall not thereafter participate in the game, except as coacher.

SEC. 4. A base-runner may have another player run for him by and with the consent of the opposing captain or manager, and when such permission is given both the regular runner and the relief runner shall be eligible for further participation in the game.

SEC. 5. A player shall be considered in the game when his name has been entered upon the official score sheet or has been announced, and if another player is substituted for such entered or announced player he shall not again participate in that game, except as coacher.

SEC. 6. The pitcher first entered upon the official score sheet or announced to start shall continue to pitch until the first opposing batsman has completed his turn at bat.

In the event of the substitution of a pitcher the new pitcher shall continue to pitch until the batsman then at bat or the first batsman opposing such new pitcher has completed his turn at bat or the side has been retired.

SEC. 7. Whenever one player is substituted for another, whether as batsman, base-runner or fielder, the umpire should immediately be notified and he in turn should announce the substitution to the spectators. Play shall be suspended while such announcement is being made. Provided however, if through oversight such announcement has not been made, the substitute shall not be called out therefor but shall be considered in the game as follows:

If a pitcher, when he takes his place on the pitcher's plate.

If a batter, when he takes his place in the batter's box.

If a fielder, when he takes the place of the fielder substituted for.

If a runner, when the substitute replaces him on the base he is holding; and any play made by or on such unannounced substitute shall be legal under these rules.

Note: Leagues may, by special rule, assess a fine or other penalty against a manager who fails to report, or an umpire who fails to announce, a substitution, but there can be no penalty against the substitute player for failure to make such report or announcement.

Rule 5—THE GAME

SECTION 1. A regulation game shall consist of seven innings, unless the team second at bat scores more runs in six innings than the team first at bat has scored in seven innings.

SEC. 2. It is a regulation game if the team last at bat in the seventh inning scores the winning run before the third man is out.

SEC. 3. It is a regulation game if it be called by the umpire on account of darkness, rain, fire, panic or other cause which puts the patrons or players in peril, provided five or more innings have been played by each side; or if the team second at bat shall have scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning or in any part of its fifth than the team first at bat has scored in five completed innings.

When a game is called in any inning after the fifth, the score shall be what it was at the time the game was called if the team second at bat has more runs than the team first at bat, or if the team second at bat has in that inning tied the score. If the team second at bat has less runs than the team first at bat when the game is called, the score shall be that of the last completed inning by both sides.

SEC. 4. If the game be a tie at the end of seven innings for each team, play shall be continued until one side has scored more runs than the other in an equal number of innings; provided that if the side last at bat scores the winning run before the third man is out in any inning after the seventh, the game shall terminate and be a regulation game.

SEC. 5. A regulation drawn game shall be declared by the umpire if the score is equal on the last even inning played, when he terminates play in accordance with Section 3 of this rule after each team has played five or more complete innings. If the side that went second to bat is at bat when the game is terminated, and has scored in the incompleting inning the same number of runs as the other side, the umpire shall declare the game drawn without regard to the score of the last equal inning. If the side last at bat shall, before the completion of its fifth inning, equal the score made by the opposing side in five complete innings, the game shall be legally drawn.

Note: A regulation drawn (tie) game is to be re-played from the beginning. However, if batting and fielding records are kept, players should be given credit for performance in regulation drawn games.

Rule 6—FORFEITED GAMES

A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favor of the team not at fault, in the following cases:

SECTION 1. If a team fails to appear upon the field, or being upon the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or assigned at the time scheduled or within the time set for forfeitures by the organization in which the team is playing.

SEC. 2. If, after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.

SEC. 3. If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after the umpire has called "Play."

SEC. 4. If a team employs tactics palpably designed to delay the game.

SEC. 5. If, after warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully violated.

SEC. 6. If the order for the removal of a player is not obeyed within one minute.

SEC. 7. If, because of the removal of players from the game by the umpire, or for any cause, there are less than nine players on either team.

Rule 7—CHOICE OF INNINGS—FITNESS OF FIELD FOR PLAY

The choice of innings shall be by toss of a coin, unless otherwise stated in the rules of the organization under which the schedule is being played.

Where a home team is designated, such team shall be the sole judge of the fitness of the ground for beginning a game. Where no home team is designated, the umpire, or umpires, shall be the judge of the fitness of the ground for beginning a game.

After play has been called by the umpire he alone shall be the judge as to the fitness of the ground for resuming play after the game has been suspended.

Rule 8—PITCHING RULE

(a) Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher shall come to a full stop, facing the batsman, with the ball held in both hands in front of the body, and with both feet squarely on the ground and in contact with the pitcher's plate, for not less than one second before taking one hand off the ball at the start of the wind-up or back-swing.

Note: One second of time may be determined by repeating at ordinary conversational speed the words, "One Thousand and One."

(b) The pitcher shall not be considered in pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.

(c) In the act of delivering the ball to the batsman the pitcher shall not take more than one step, which must be forward and toward the batsman. The step must be taken simultaneously with the delivery of the ball to the batsman.

(d) A legal delivery shall be a ball which is delivered to the batter underhand and with a follow through of the hand and wrist past the straight line of the body before the ball is released. The pitcher may use any wind-up he desires providing that in the final delivery of the ball to the batter, the hand shall be below the hip and the wrist not farther from the body than the elbow.

(e) At no time during the progress of the game shall the pitcher be allowed to use tape, or other substance, upon the pitching hand or fingers; nor shall any foreign substance be applied to the ball, provided that, under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin may be used to dry the hands.

NO PITCH

No pitch shall be declared whenever the pitcher pitches during a suspension of play or when he attempts a quick return of the ball before the batsman has taken position or is off balance as the result of a previous pitch.

Rule 9—ILLEGAL PITCHES

An illegal pitch, entitling the base-runner or runners to advance one base, shall be called by the umpire as follows; and in each of the cases cited a ball shall also be called in favor of the batsman:

1. Any delivery of the ball to the batsman without previously taking position as defined in (a) and (b), Rule 8.
2. If the pitcher takes more than one step before releasing the ball.
3. Final delivery of the ball to the batsman with the hand above the hip and the wrist of the pitching arm farther from the body than the elbow.—(d), Rule 8.
4. Failure to follow through with the hand and wrist past the straight line of the body.—(d), Rule 8.
5. Rolling the ball along the ground or dropping the ball, by the pitcher while the pitcher is in pitching position. Sec. 3, Rule 11.
6. Holding the ball by the pitcher more than 20 seconds. Sec. 5, Rule 11.
7. Making any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batsman. Sec. 6, Rule 11.

Note: This bars the so-called "rocker" action of a pitcher who, after having the ball in both hands in pitching position, separates the hands making a backward and forward swing of the pitching arm bringing the ball again into both hands in front of the body, or any type of wind-up in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion. This does not bar a wind-up in which the motion of the pitching arm is continuous even though the hand taken off

the ball may again touch and travel with the ball in the course of such wind-up.

8. Delivery of the ball to the batsman when the catcher is outside the lines of the catcher's position as defined in Rule 2. Sec. 6, Rule 27.
9. If the pitcher continues to wind-up after taking the step.—(c) Rule 8.
10. If the pitcher takes pitching position on or near the pitcher's plate without having the ball in his possession.

In each of the foregoing cases the ball shall be dead and not in play until again put in play at the pitcher's box, provided, however, that if the batsman strikes at and hits into fair territory any of the foregoing illegal pitches, then there shall be no penalty for such illegal pitch and the ball shall remain in play, and base-runners may run bases or be put out as though the ball had been legally pitched.

Rule 10—FAIRLY DELIVERED BALL

SECTION 1. A fairly delivered ball is one pitched by the pitcher while standing in his position and facing the batsman that passes over any portion of the home plate before touching the ground, not lower than the batsman's knees nor higher than his shoulder. For every such fairly delivered ball the umpire shall call one strike.

Other cases in which the umpire shall call a strike are:

SEC. 2. A pitched ball struck at by the batsman without its touching his bat.

SEC. 3. A foul hit ball not caught on the fly unless the batsman has two strikes.

SEC. 4. A pitched ball at which the batsman strikes but misses and which touches any part of his person.

SEC. 5. A foul tip, held by the catcher, while standing within the lines of his position.

Rule 11—UNFAIRLY DELIVERED BALL

SECTION 1. An unfairly delivered ball is a ball delivered to the batsman by the pitcher while standing in his position and facing the batsman that does not pass over any portion of the home plate between the batsman's knees and shoulders, or that touches the ground before passing home plate, unless struck at by the batsman.

For every unfairly delivered ball the umpire shall call one ball.

Other cases in which the umpire shall call a ball are:

SEC. 2. An illegally pitched ball unless the batsman hits such a pitched ball fairly. (An illegally pitched ball struck at and missed, or fouled, and an illegally pitched ball at which the batsman does not strike, shall be called a ball under this rule.)

SEC. 3. A ball rolled along the ground, or dropped, by the pitcher while in the pitching position.

SEC. 4. A ball shall be called each time the pitcher delays the game by fail-

ing to deliver the ball to the batsman for a longer period than 20 seconds, except that at the commencement of each inning, or when a pitcher relieves another, the pitcher may occupy one minute in delivering not to exceed five balls to the catcher or an infielder, during which time play shall be suspended.

SEC. 5. A ball shall be called each time the pitcher makes any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the bat.

Rule 12—RULES FOR BATSMAN

Each player of the side at bat shall become a batsman and must take his position within the batsman's lines (as defined in Rule 2) in the order that his name appears in his team's batting order.

Rule 13—ORDER OF BATTING

SECTION 1. The batting order of each team must be on the score card and must be delivered before the game by the manager or captain to the umpire at the home plate, who shall submit it to the inspection of the manager or captain of the other side. The batting order delivered to the umpire must be followed throughout the game unless a player be substituted for another, in which case the substitute must take the place in the batting order of the retired player.

SEC. 2. After the first inning the first batter in each inning shall be the batsman whose name follows that of the last man who completed his "time at bat" in the preceding inning.

When the third out in an inning may be the result of a base-runner leaving his base too soon on a pitched ball and a batsman is put out or becomes a base-runner on the same pitch, the player following such batsman in the batting order shall be the first batter in the next inning. (Refer to Scoring of Put-Out—Note.)

SEC. 3. A batsman has completed his "time at bat" when he has become a base-runner, as defined in Rule 26, or has been put out according to the provisions of Rule 20.

Rule 14—A FAIR HIT BALL

A fair hit ball is a legally batted ball that settles on fair ground between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that is on or over fair ground when bounding to the outfield, or that touches first or third base, or that first falls on fair ground on or beyond first or third base, or that while on or over fair ground touches the person of the umpire or a player. A fair fly must be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul ground at the time he touches the ball.

Note: A batted ball which first touches foul ground then rolls or bounds into fair territory before having touched any object other than the playing

field is a fair ball, provided it rolls or bounces into the diamond before reaching first or third base. A batted ball which first touches fair ground and rolls foul and then again rolls into the diamond before reaching first or third base is a fair ball, provided that while the ball was on or over foul territory it did not touch any person or thing other than the playing field.

Rule 15—A FOUL HIT BALL

A foul hit ball is a legally batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base or home and third base, or that bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory or that falls on foul territory beyond first or third base, or that while on or over foul ground touches the person of the umpire or a player.

Note: A batted ball which touches any person, or object, such as a bat, glove, fence, bench or screen, or is handled by a fielder while on or over foul territory, is a foul ball regardless of where it may go thereafter.

Rule 16—A FOUL TIP

A foul tip is a ball batted by the batsman while standing in the lines of his position, that goes sharp and direct to the hands of the catcher and is legally caught.

Any foul tip caught is a strike and the ball remains in play.

A foul hit ball which rises higher than the batsman's head shall not be a foul tip under this rule.

Rule 17—A BUNT HIT BALL

A bunt is a batted ball, not swung at by the batsman, but met with the bat and which does not go out of the infield. A ball which touches the bat while the batsman is attempting to avoid being hit by a pitched ball shall not be considered a bunted ball under this rule.

Rule 18—BALLS BATTED OUTSIDE OF THE PLAYING FIELD

SECTION 1. When a batted ball passes outside the playing field the umpire shall declare it fair or foul, according to where it leaves the playing field.

SEC. 2. A fair-batted fly ball that goes over the fence or into a stand shall entitle the batsman to a home run, unless it pass out of the grounds or into a stand at a less distance than 200 feet from the home base, in which case the batsman shall be entitled to two bases only. In either event the batsman must touch the bases in regular order. The point at which the fence or stand is less than 200 feet from the home base shall be plainly indicated for the umpire's guidance.

SEC. 3. A fair hit ball that bounds or rolls into a stand or over, UNDER or THROUGH a fence or other obstruction marking the boundaries of the playing field shall be a two-base hit.

Note: Whenever the location of obstructions, such as trees, wires, parked automobiles or spectators necessitates a modification of this rule, a special ground rule should be established. Such special ground rule should be written upon the official score sheet and signed by both managers before the start of the game.

Rule 19—AN ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL

An illegally batted ball is a ball batted in any way by the batsman when either or both of his feet are upon the ground outside the line of the batsman's position.

Rule 20—WHEN BATSMAN IS OUT

The batsman is out:

SECTION 1. If he does not bat next after the player who precedes him in the batting order.

If the error is discovered **AFTER** an improper batsman has completed his turn at bat and **BEFORE** there has been a pitch to another batsman, the player who should have batted is out.

Only the player who should have followed the player preceding him in the batting order is out.

If a player is called out for failing to bat, no act of the player who batted in place of the man called out is legal, and any runs scored or bases run while the improper batsman was at bat are nullified and all runners must return to the bases occupied when the improper batsman took his position in the batter's box.

The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat.

If the error is discovered before the improper batsman has completed the turn at bat, the player who should have batted may replace the improper batsman at the plate, in which case the balls and strikes, if any, must be counted in the time at bat of the regular batsman.

If the error is discovered while the improper batsman is at bat and the proper batsman replaces him at the plate, then any runs scored or bases run while the improper batsman was at bat shall be legal.

If the improper batsman has completed his turn at bat and the ball has been pitched to another batsman, then the turn at bat of the improper batsman shall be legal and the next batter in order shall be the one whose name follows that of the improper batsman.

Players who have not batted and have not been called out under this rule have simply lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.

Should the batsman declared out under this section be the third out and his side thereby put out, the proper batsman in the next inning shall be the player who would have come to bat had the players been put out by ordinary play in the preceding inning.

SEC. 2. If he fails to take his position within one minute after the umpire has called for the batsman.

SEC. 3. If he makes a foul hit, other than a foul tip as defined in Rule 15, and the ball is caught by a fielder before touching the ground; provided it is not caught in a fielder's hat, cap, protector, pocket or other part of his uniform, or does not strike some object other than a fielder before being caught.

SEC. 4. If he bats the ball illegally as defined in Rule 19.

SEC. 5. If he bunts foul after the second strike.

SEC. 6. If he attempts to hinder the catcher from fielding or throwing the ball by stepping outside the lines of the batsman's position, or in any way obstructs or interferes with that player; except that if a base-runner attempting to steal is put out the batsman shall not be out; except also that the batsman shall not be out under this section if the base-runner is declared out according to Section 14 of Rule 29.

SEC. 7. Immediately after he has three strikes if there are no outs or one out AND there is a runner on first base, or runners on first and second bases, or runners on first, second and third bases, or runners on first and third bases.

Note: Under this section the batsman does not become a base-runner, even though the third strike is not caught, thereby preventing a trick force play set up by the intentional dropping of a third strike.

If the first base is not occupied, regardless of the number of outs, the batsman becomes a base-runner on three strikes and the third strike must be caught or he must be thrown out.

If two are out, whether or not first or any other base is occupied, the batsman becomes a base-runner on three strikes and the third strike must be caught or he must be thrown out. (Refer to Secs. 4, 5 and 6 of Rule 29.)

SEC. 8. If the third strike struck at and missed touches any part of the batsman's person.

SEC. 9. If, before two are out, while first and second, or, first, second and third bases are occupied, he hits a fair fly ball, other than a line drive, or a bunted fly ball, that is handled or in the opinion of the umpire would have landed within or near the base lines.

SEC. 10. If he steps from one batsman's box to the other while the pitcher is in his position ready to pitch.

Note: No bases shall be run if the batter is declared out under Sections 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 of this rule.

Rule 21—DEFINITION

SECTION 1. A block is a batted or thrown ball that is touched, stopped, or handled by a person not engaged in the game.

SEC. 2. Whenever a block occurs the umpire shall declare it and base-runners may advance, without liability to be put out, one base in addition to the one to which they were going at the start of the play in which the block occurs.

Note: A wild pitch or passed ball shall not be a block under this Rule.

SEC. 3. A wild pitch is a legally delivered ball so high, low or wide of the plate that the catcher cannot or does not stop and control it with ordinary effort.

SEC. 4. A passed ball is a legally delivered ball that should have been held or controlled by the catcher with ordinary effort.

SEC. 5. A force-out can be made only when a base-runner legally loses the right to the base he occupies by reason of the batsman becoming a base-runner and he is thereby forced to advance.

A force-out shall not be destroyed by the fact that a succeeding runner is called out for leaving his base too soon.

Rule 22—BALL DEAD NOT IN PLAY

The ball is dead and not in play:

1. If a pitched ball touches any part of the batsman's person or clothing while the batsman is standing in his position, whether the ball is struck at or not.
2. In case of an illegally batted ball, or in case of a batsman stepping from one box to the other when the pitcher is ready to pitch.
3. In case of a foul hit ball not legally caught.
4. In case of interference with the fielder or batsman.
5. In case a fair hit ball strikes a base-runner or umpire before touching a fielder.
6. In case an overthrown ball touches the person or clothing of a coacher.
7. In case a block ball is declared.
8. In case of an overthrow, if the ball touches any obstruction or person.
9. In case of an illegally pitched ball, or a ball dropped or rolled along the ground by the pitcher.
10. In case "Not Pitch" is declared.

In all the foregoing cases the ball shall not be considered in play until it is held by pitcher standing in his position and the umpire shall have called "Play."

Rule 23—BALL IN PLAY

The ball remains in play and base-runners may at their own risk run bases or be put out:

1. After a fly ball, either fair or foul, or a foul tip, has been legally caught.
2. After "four balls" has been called, provided that the batsman cannot be put out before he reaches first base.
3. After an interference by a fielder with a base-runner, provided that the runner interfered with cannot be put out before he reaches the base to which he is going. Sec. 5, Rule 27.
4. After base-runners have reached the bases to which they are entitled under Sec. 7, Rule 27.
5. If a fair hit ball strikes an umpire on fair ground after passing a fielder. Sec. 1, Rule 27.
6. If a fair hit ball strikes an umpire on foul ground. Sec. 1, Rule 27.
7. In case of any overthrown ball which remains inside the foul lines.

8. In case of any thrown or pitched ball which is not blocked or which does not touch an obstruction in foul territory. Secs. 3 and 8, Rule 27.
9. In case a thrown or pitched ball strikes an umpire. Sec. 4, Rule 27.
Note: Sec. 4, Rule 27, does not put the ball out of play, but simply limits the advance of the runner.
10. When a base-runner is called out for leaving his base too soon.
11. And in all other cases except as provided in Rule 22.

Rule 24—AN OVERTHROW

An overthrow is a ball thrown from one fielder to another to retire a runner who has not reached or is off his base, and which goes into foul territory on a play at first, third, or home base. The advance of runners on an overthrow shall be determined by the base occupied by the runner at the time of the pitch preceding the overthrow.

Note: The difference between an overthrow and a passed ball. An overthrow is made only in making a play on a runner, while a passed ball is always a pitched ball. Also that in order to be an overthrow under this rule the ball must go into foul territory. A ball thrown past or over a baseman and which stays on fair ground is not an overthrow. This rule applies only at first, third, and home. A ball overthrown in making a play at second base does not come under this rule even though the ball may go into foul territory.

Rule 25—LEGAL ORDER OF BASES

SECTION 1. The base-runner must touch each base in legal order, viz., first, second, third and home bases; and when obliged to return while the ball is in play, must retouch the base or bases in reverse order. He can only acquire the right to a base by touching it, before having been put out, and then shall be entitled to hold such base until he has legally touched the next base in order, or has been legally forced to vacate it for a succeeding base-runner. However, no base-runner shall score a run to count in the game ahead of the base-runner preceding him in the batting order, if there be such preceding base-runner who has not been put out in that inning.

SEC. 2. Having become a base-runner or having acquired legal title to a base, the base-runner cannot run bases in reverse order for the purpose either of confusing the fielders or making a travesty of the game. Runners are to be called out for violation of this rule.

SEC. 3. In case a runner is being run down between bases, and the following runner occupies the same base the first runner has left, the second man cannot be put out while holding said base. If the first runner, however, returns safely to the base he left, and both runners are there occupying the same base, the second runner is the man out, if touched with the ball.

SEC. 4. The failure of a preceding runner to touch a base (and who is declared out therefor) shall not affect the status of a succeeding runner who touches each base in proper order; except that, after two are out, a succeeding runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for

failing to touch a base as provided in Rule 29, Sec. 11. This exception also applies to a batsman who hits the ball out of the playing field for an apparent home run.

Rule 26—WHEN THE BATSMAN BECOMES A BASE-RUNNER

SECTION 1. Instantly after he hits a fair ball.

SEC. 2. Instantly after three strikes have been called, unless first base is occupied with less than two out. See Rule 20, Sec. 7—Rule 29, Secs. 4, 5, 6.

SEC. 3. Instantly after "four balls" has been called by the umpire.

SEC. 4. If the catcher interferes with him in, or prevents him from, striking at a pitched ball.

SEC. 5. If a fair hit ball strikes the person or clothing of the umpire or a base-runner on fair ground.

SEC. 6. If a pitched ball, not struck at, touches any part of the batsman's person or clothing, while standing in his position, unless in the opinion of the umpire, he plainly makes no effort to get out of the way of the pitched ball, in which case the umpire shall call a strike or ball in accordance with Rules 10 and 11.

Rule 27—ENTITLED TO BASES

The base-runner shall be entitled, without liability to be put out, to advance one base except where more are specified, in the following cases:

SECTION 1. If, while the batsman, he becomes a base-runner by reason of "four balls," or FOR BEING HIT BY A PITCHED BALL, or for being interfered with in striking at a pitched ball, or if a fair hit ball strikes the person or clothing of an umpire or a base-runner before touching a fielder; provided that, if a fair hit ball strikes the umpire after having passed a fielder other than the pitcher, or having been touched by a fielder (including the pitcher), the ball shall be considered in play. Also, if a fair hit ball strikes the umpire on foul ground, the ball shall be in play.

SEC. 2. If the umpire awards to a succeeding batsman a base on "four balls," or FOR BEING HIT BY A PITCHED BALL, or for being interfered with by the catcher in striking at a pitched ball, and the base-runner is thereby forced to vacate the base held by him.

SEC. 3. If a ball delivered by the pitcher passes the catcher and touches any fence, building or backstop within 25 feet of home plate all base-runners shall be entitled to advance one base.

SEC. 4. If a thrown or pitched ball strikes the person or clothing of an umpire, the ball shall be considered in play and the base-runner, or base-runners, shall be entitled to not more than one base.

Note: This section states an exception to the opening paragraph of this rule in which runners are entitled to advance without liability to be put out. It limits the advance of runners to one base, but makes it necessary for them to make that base.

SEC. 5. If he is prevented from making a base by the obstruction of a fielder, except when a fielder is trying to field a batted ball, unless the fielder has the ball in his hand ready to touch the base-runner. The ball is still in play as far as other base-runners are concerned, affecting the runner interfered with after he has reached the base to which he is entitled because of the interference.

SEC. 6. It shall be illegal for the catcher to leave his designated position immediately and directly back of the plate for the purpose of aiding the pitcher to give intentionally a base on balls to a batsman. If the catcher shall move out of position prior to the time of the ball leaving the pitcher's hand, all runners on bases shall be entitled to advance one base.

SEC. 7. If the fielder stops or catches a batted ball or a thrown ball with his cap, glove, or any part of his uniform, while detached from its proper place on his person, the runner or runners shall be entitled to three bases if a batted ball or two bases, if a thrown ball, and in either case the runner may advance further at his own risk.

SEC. 8. When, on any play which starts with a batted ball, the ball is overthrown into foul territory at first, third, or home bases, and the ball touches any obstruction or is blocked, the runner being played shall be entitled to advance one base beyond that at which the overthrow was made and all other runners shall be entitled to the same number of bases as the man on whom the play was made. (Rule 24.) Number of bases to be determined by the base occupied by each runner at the time of the pitch preceding the overthrow.

Note: If the ball is not blocked, or does not touch an obstruction, the ball remains in play and runners may advance at their own risk as far as they can make it.

SEC. 9. If the pitcher drops or rolls the ball along the ground or if the pitcher makes an illegal delivery, provided the batsman does not hit an illegally pitched ball fairly.

Note: When a runner is entitled to a base without liability to be put out, while the ball is in play, or under any rule in which the ball is in play after the runner reaches the base to which he is entitled, failure to touch the base to which the runner is entitled before attempting to make the next base shall forfeit his exemption from liability to be put out, and the runner may be put out by a play at the base or by tagging the runner before he returns to the base to which he was entitled.

Should the runner so put out be the batsman at first base, or any runner compelled to advance to make room for the batsman, and such out should also be the third out in an inning, such out shall have the status of a force-out.

This interpretation applies to all runners advancing as the result of the batsman being awarded a base on balls, runners advancing because of interference by a fielder and runners advancing after a batted or thrown ball has been touched by any part of a fielder's equipment when detached from its proper place.

Rule 28—RETURNING TO BASES

The base-runner shall return to his base without liability to be put out:

SECTION 1. If the umpire declares any foul not legally caught.

SEC. 2. If the umpire declares an illegally batted ball.

SEC. 3. If a thrown ball touches the coacher.

SEC. 4. If the umpire declares a dead ball, unless it is also the fourth ball and he is thereby forced to take the next base.

SEC. 5. If the person or clothing of the umpire, while stationed back of the bat, interferes with the catcher in attempt to throw.

SEC. 6. If a pitched ball at which the batsman strikes but misses, touches any part of the batsman's person.

SEC. 7. If the umpire is struck by a fair hit ball before touching a fielder; in which case no base shall be run unless necessitated by the batsman becoming a base-runner, and no run shall be scored unless all bases are occupied.

SEC. 8. If the umpire declares the batsman or base-runner out for interference; in which case the base-runner shall return to the last base that was in the judgment of the umpire legally touched by him at the time of the interference.

In any and all the foregoing cases the base-runner is not required to touch the intervening bases in returning to the base to which he is legally entitled.

SEC. 9. Whenever a runner sliding into a base dislodges it from its proper position, the base shall be said to follow the runner and a runner having made such a base safely shall not be out for being off such base until the runner has had opportunity to occupy such base again in proper position. (A runner who attempts to advance beyond the base dislodged before it is again in proper position shall forfeit this exemption.)

Rule 29—WHEN BASE-RUNNERS ARE OUT

The base-runner is out:

SECTION 1. If, having made a fair hit ball while batsman, such fair hit ball is caught by a fielder before touching the ground or any object other than a fielder; provided it be not caught in a fielder's hat, cap, protector, pocket or other part of his uniform.

SEC. 2. If, after a fair hit ball, the ball is securely held by a fielder while touching first base with any part of his person before such base-runner touches first base.

SEC. 3. If, after a fair hit ball, he is touched with the ball in the hand of a fielder before he shall have touched first base.

Note: It is sufficient if the runner be touched with the hand or glove in which the ball is held.

SEC. 4. If the third strike be legally caught by a fielder before touching the ground.

SEC. 5. If after three strikes he be touched with the ball in the hand of a fielder before he shall have touched first base.

SEC. 6. If after three strikes the ball be securely held by a fielder while touching first base with any part of his person before such runner touches first base.

(Note: Sections 4, 5 and 6 of this rule show how the player who was the batsman is put out after three strikes, except as shown in Sec. 7 of Rule 20. Read also Sec. 2 of Rule 26.)

SEC. 7. If, in running the last half of the distance from home to first base, while the ball is being fielded to first base, he runs outside the three foot line, as defined in Rule 2, and, in the opinion of the umpire, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base; except that he may run outside the three foot line to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.

Note: If the runner runs on or inside the base-line and in any way interferes with the play being made at first base, he should be called out.

SEC. 8. If, in running to any base, he runs more than three feet from a direct line between a base and the next one in regular or reverse order to avoid being touched by a ball in the hand of a fielder. But in case a fielder be occupying a base-runner's proper path in attempting to field a batted ball, then the base-runner shall run out of the direct line to the next base and behind such fielder and shall not be declared out for so doing.

Note: It is not necessary for the runner to follow the direct line between the bases unless a fielder, in the direct line, actually has the ball in his possession. Read this section in connection with Section 5 of Rule 2. Notice that actual possession of the ball is the controlling factor.

SEC. 9. If he fails to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball in the manner described in this rule, or in any way obstructs a fielder in attempting to field a batted ball, or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball; provided that if two or more fielders attempt to field a batted ball, and the base-runner comes in contact with one or more of them, the umpire shall determine which fielder is entitled to the benefit of this rule, and shall not decide the base-runner out for coming in contact with a fielder other than the one the umpire determines to be entitled to field such batted ball. If a fair hit ball goes through an infielder and hits a runner immediately back of him, the umpire must not declare the runner out for being hit by a batted ball. In making such decision the umpire must be convinced that the ball passed through the infield and that no other infielder had the chance to make a play on the ball. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the runner deliberately and intentionally kicks such a hit ball, on which the infielder has missed a play, then the runner must be called out for interference.

SEC. 10. If at any time while the ball is in play he is touched by the ball in the hands of a fielder, unless some part of his person is touching the base he is entitled to occupy; provided, however, that the ball is held by the fielder after touching him, unless the base-runner deliberately knocks it out of his hand. The ball must be held firmly by the fielder after touching the runner. The ball cannot be juggled even though the fielder may retain possession of the ball and prevent same from dropping to the ground.

SEC. 11. If, when a fair or foul hit ball (other than a foul tip) is legally caught by a fielder, such ball is legally held by a fielder on the base occupied

by the base-runner when such ball is batted, or the base-runner is touched with the ball in the hand of a fielder, before he retouches such base after such fair or foul hit ball is so caught; provided that the base-runner shall not be out in such case, if, after the ball is legally caught, it is delivered to the bat by the pitcher before the fielder holds it on said base, or touches the base-runner out with it; but if the base-runner, in attempting to reach a base, detaches it from its fastenings before being put out, he shall be declared safe. A base-runner who holds his base on a fly ball shall have the right to advance the moment the ball touches a fielder.

Note: This is an appeal play and the umpire should not make any decision until his attention has been called to it and the play actually made at the base in question.

Note 2: An out declared under this rule is not a force-out and when such out is the third out in an inning, any run scored before the out is actually made will count.

SEC. 12. If, when the batsman becomes a base-runner, the first base or the first and second bases, or the first, second and third bases are occupied, any base-runner so occupying a base shall cease to be entitled to hold it, and may be put out at the next base in the same manner as in running to first base, or by being touched with the ball in the hands of a fielder at any time before any base-runner following him in the batting order is put out, unless the umpire shall decide the hit of the batsman to be an infield fly.

SEC. 13. If a fair hit ball strikes him while on or off a base before touching a fielder, and, in such case, no base shall be run unless necessitated by the batsman becoming a base-runner, but no run shall be scored or any other base-runner be put out until the umpire puts the ball back into play.

SEC. 14. If, when advancing bases, or being obliged to return to a base, unless the ball is dead, he fails to touch the intervening base or bases, if any, in regular or reverse order, as the case may be, he may be put out by the ball being held by a fielder on any base he failed to touch, or by being touched with the ball in the hand of a fielder in the same manner as in running to first base; provided that the base-runner shall not be out in such case if the ball be delivered to the bat by the pitcher before the play is made on the runner or at the base.

Note: This is an appeal play and the umpire should not make any decision until his attention has been called to it and the play actually made at the base in question.

SEC. 15. If he leaves or fails to keep contact with the base which he is entitled to occupy, while the pitcher has the ball in pitching position and until a legally pitched ball has left the hand of the pitcher.

SEC. 16. If, when the umpire calls "Play" after the suspension of a game he fails to return to and touch the base he occupied when "Time" was called before touching the next base; provided that the base-runner shall not be out, in such case, if the ball is delivered to the bat by the pitcher before the fielder holds it on said base or touches the base-runner with it.

SEC. 17. If, with one out, or none out, and a base-runner on third base, the batsman interferes with a play being made at home plate.

SEC. 18. If he passes a preceding base-runner before such runner has been legally put out, he shall be declared out immediately.

SEC. 19. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the coacher at third base by touching or holding the runner physically assists him in returning to or leaving third base. The runner, however, shall not be declared out if no play is being made on him.

SEC. 20. The base-runner in running to first base may overrun said base after touching it in passing without incurring liability to be put out for being off said base, regardless of which direction he turns, provided he returns at once and touches the base, after which he may be put out as at any other base. If, after overrunning first base, he attempts to run to second base before returning to first base, he shall forfeit such exemption from liability to be put out.

Note: This is an appeal play and the umpire should not make any decision until his attention has been called to it and the play actually made at the base in question.

SEC. 21. If the coacher stationed near third base shall run in the direction of home base on or near the base line while a fielder is making or trying to make a play on a batted ball not caught on the fly, or on a thrown ball, or a fly ball, and thereby draws a throw to home base, the base-runner nearest to third base shall be declared out by the umpire for the coacher's interference.

SEC. 22. If one or more members of the team at bat stand or collect at or around a base for which a base-runner is trying, thereby confusing the fielding side and adding to the difficulty of making such a play, or if a member of the team at bat obstructs or interferes with any play being made upon a base-runner, the base-runner shall be called out for the interference of his team-mate or team-mates.

SEC. 23. If he runs bases in reverse order as defined in Rule 25, Sec. 2.

(Note: Under Sections of this rule applying to the touching of bases, it is presumed that the bases are securely fastened in position.

When a base is dislodged from its proper position it shall be replaced at the earliest possible moment. A runner who accidentally dislodges a base and runners following in the same series of plays shall not be compelled to follow a base unreasonably out of position.)

Rule 30—SCORING OF RUNS

SECTION 1. One run shall be scored every time a base-runner, after having legally touched the first three bases, shall legally touch the home base before three men are put out; provided, however, that if he reaches home on or during a play in which the third man is forced out or is put out before reaching first base, a run shall not count; also, if the third out is made by a preceding runner failing to touch a base a run shall not count.

Note: No run shall be scored on any play in which the third man is called out for leaving his base before a pitched ball has left the pitcher's hand.

Note 2: An out for leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball is not a

force-out and when such an out is the third out in an inning any run scored before the out was actually made will count.

Note 3: In case of a runner failing to touch a base, if the base missed is the one to which a runner is forced to advance by reason of the batsman becoming a base-runner, and the out is the third out in an inning, no run scored in that series of plays will count, regardless of whether the runs were across the plate before the out was actually made.

Rule 31—UMPIRES

1. **POWERS AND DUTIES.** The umpires are the representatives of the league or organization by which they have been assigned to a particular game, and as such are authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. They shall have power to order a player, coach, captain or manager to do or omit to do any act which in their judgment is necessary to give force and effect to one or all of these rules and to inflict penalties as herein prescribed.

2. **SINGLE UMPIRE.** If but one umpire be assigned, his duties and jurisdiction shall extend to all points, and he shall be permitted to take his stand in any part of the field that in his opinion will best enable him to discharge his duties.

3. **PLATE UMPIRE.** The Plate Umpire shall take his position back of the catcher; he shall have full charge of and be responsible for the proper conduct of the game. With the exception of the decisions to be made by the Base Umpire, as described in Section 4 of this rule, the Plate Umpire shall render all the decisions that ordinarily devolve upon a single umpire.

He shall call balls and strikes, he shall determine whether a batted ball is fair or foul, whether a fly ball has been caught, whether a batter bunts, whether a pitched ball touches the person or clothing of the batter and whether or not a fly ball is an infield or an outfield fly.

He shall render base decisions in the following instances:

- a. If the ball is hit fair, with a runner on first, he must go to third base to make a possible decision.
- b. With more than one base occupied, he shall, on appeal, decide whether or not a runner on third leaves that base before a fly ball is caught.
- c. In case of a runner being caught between third and home, when more than one base is occupied, he shall make the decision on the runner nearest home plate; he shall have equal authority with the Base Umpire in calling a runner out for leaving his base too soon.

4. **BASE UMPIRE.** The Base Umpire shall take such positions on the playing field as in his judgment are best suited for the rendering of base decisions. He shall render all decisions at first and second base, and all decisions at third base except those to be made by the Plate Umpire in accordance with Section 3. He shall also have equal authority with the Plate Umpire in calling "illegal" pitches. He shall aid the Plate Umpire in every manner in enforcing the rules of the game and with the exception of declaring a forfeiture,

shall have equal authority with the Plate Umpire in removing players from the game.

5. **NO CONFLICT OF AUTHORITY.** Under no circumstances shall either umpire criticize or interfere with a decision unless asked to do so by his associate. In case the manager or captain of a team seeks a reversal of a decision, the umpire making the decision may, if he is in doubt, ask his associate for information before acting on the manager's or captain's appeal. However, the final decision shall rest with the umpire whose exclusive authority it was to make the decision and who requested an opinion of the other.

6. **PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION.** *It is the duty of Coachers to give instructions and directions to their own players. Umpires shall not permit Coachers, under subterfuge of talking to their own players or otherwise, to make disparaging or insulting remarks to or about opposing players, officials or spectators.*

In all cases of violation of rules by a player, coach or manager, the penalty shall be prompt removal of the offender from the game and grounds. In the event of the removal of a player, coach or manager, he shall go directly to the club house and remain there during the progress of the game, or leave the grounds, and a failure to do so will warrant a forfeiture of the game.

Umpires shall not permit any person connected with any team to continue to violate any rules even though there is a penalty attached to the specific violation and after due warning shall remove such person from the game.

7. **CANNOT CHANGE UMPIRE.** The umpire cannot be changed during a game by the consent of the contesting clubs unless the official is incapacitated from service by injury or illness.

Note: There seems to be some confusion as to the authority of umpires when two or more are working.

The powers and duties of both the Plate and the Base umpire are clearly set forth in the rule, and, except where the rule provides that the authority is equal, each has exclusive jurisdiction in making the decisions assigned to him.

There is a mistaken idea that sometimes one umpire reverses a decision made by another. There is also a mistaken idea that an umpire, once having made a decision cannot reverse that decision.

It must be remembered that it is the duty of an umpire to make correct decisions, and that the speed of action and the condition surrounding a play may make this very difficult.

If, however, an umpire finds that he has mis-called a play, it is not only his right but his duty to call the play correctly.

In reaching his conclusion it is his privilege to consult his associate who, at the time, may have been in better position to see just what took place. The associate may, however, only express his opinion, the final decision must rest with the umpire whose business it was to make that decision.

Umpires should be very careful not to express their opinion on a play called by another umpire unless the umpire who made the decision, himself, requests an opinion.

When an umpire finds it necessary to reverse himself, this should be done before any succeeding play takes place.

SUSPENSION OF PLAY

When two or more umpires are working, any one of them may suspend play when in his judgment conditions justify such action. The umpire suspending play shall audibly call "Time" and indicate the suspension of play by extending the arms above the head. Other umpires shall immediately acknowledge the suspension of play by like action.

Umpires shall not call "Time" after the pitcher has started his wind-up nor while any play is in action. In case of injury to a player time shall not be called until all plays then in action are completed or the runners have been held at their bases.

Play shall be suspended whenever the plate umpire leaves his position to brush the plate or to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays, and if, through oversight, "Time" has not been called, play shall be suspended from the time the plate umpire leaves his position and until he has resumed his position and has started play.

Umpires should be particularly careful about the suspension of play when players, coaches or managers leave their positions or encroach upon the playing field for the purpose of requesting "time out" or to dispute the calling of a play. Such action shall not be permitted to interfere with any play already in action by the opponent, and an illegal pitch shall not be called against a pitcher who halts delivery because of such action on the part of an opponent.

Whenever a batsman or a pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason the umpire shall suspend play. When a batsman steps out after a pitcher is in motion, the umpire shall call a ball or a strike if the pitch is completed. Neither the pitcher nor the batsman should be permitted to continue this practice simply to annoy each other or to delay the game.

Base umpires are the assistants of the plate umpire and the plate umpire shall have the authority to determine whether the pitcher was in motion or plays were in action at the time play was suspended.

Umpires may refuse to impose the penalty for violation when the imposition of such penalty would benefit the offending team. For example—Should the catcher interfere with the batsman in striking at a pitched ball, and the batsman so hit the ball that he and other runners advance safely on the play, the umpire may disregard the interference.

Slow-Pitching Softball Rules

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In the slow-pitching game, emphasis is taken off pitching and placed on batting and fielding—with amazing results. It permits many more to participate, and therefore is an ideal game for recreational, industrial and school groups where the exceptional skill required for the fast type of game is not as widespread as it might be.

The game is usually played with a larger ball—14 or 16 inches in circumference. Pitchers develop considerable skill in their slow delivery, although they do not record strikeouts in the customary wholesale fashion. Official rules can be used, with these changes:

PITCHING DISTANCE—35 feet from the front of the pitching slab to the back of home plate.

SIZE OF BALL—The 14-inch or 16-inch ball should be used. The 12-inch ball is not adapted for this type of game and should not be used.

PITCHING RULES—All of the rules governing delivery are effective in the slow-pitching game, with the additional provision that the ball must be delivered to the batter at a moderate speed. Most umpires require that the ball describe a slight arc on its way to the plate, in order to be considered “moderate speed.” If the ball is thrown too fast, it is an illegal pitch, and the rules governing an illegal pitch cover this. There is no balk in slow-pitching.

BASE-RUNNING—The official rule governing leading off a base and stealing bases is amended for slow-pitching with this provision. “The base-runner shall not be called out for taking a lead off a base while the pitcher has the ball in pitching position, but must return if he has reached the next base safely, unless the batter has legally hit the ball, in which event it continues in play. A runner may be tagged out at any time while off his base, except when returning after having reached the next base safely.”

Scoring Rules for Softball

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Several methods of making the play by play record of a game have been devised and the choice rests largely with the scorer. It is advisable, however, that in a league or organization all scorers use the same system.

THE BOX SCORE

The Box Score of a game shall show the offensive and defensive performance of each player. It shall be arranged in six columns and a Summary.

The First column shall show the number of Times at Bat by each player, but a Time at Bat shall not be charged against a player who was awarded a base on balls, for interference by the catcher, or when he makes a Sacrifice Hit or a Sacrifice Fly.

The Second column shall show the number of Runs made by each player.

The Third column shall show the number of Hits made by each player.

A player shall be credited with a Hit each time he bats the ball in such manner that he reaches first base, and any and all runners forced to advance reach the next base, safely, without the air of an error or a mis-play on the part of the fielding team.

A base hit shall be credited to the batsman in each case where a base-runner is retired by being struck by a batted ball, unless batted by himself.

A base hit shall be credited in each case where the ball becomes dead by reason of a batted ball striking the person or clothing of an umpire on fair ground.

In no case shall a Hit be credited when a base-runner is forced out by the play.

Whenever a fielder, after handling the ball, elects to try to retire a base-runner instead of the batter, the play is known as a "fielder's choice." If the runner is retired, or would be retired but for an error, the batter shall be charged with a Time at Bat, but no Hit. If the runner is not retired and no error is made, the batter shall be charged with a Time at Bat but no Hit if he swung at the ball, but if he bunted the ball, he shall be credited with a Sacrifice Hit; however, if in the judgment of the scorer the batter could not have been retired at first base by perfect fielding, he shall be credited with a base hit.

The Fourth column shall show the number of opponents put out by each player.

A Put Out shall be credited as follows:

To the Catcher:

- When he catches the third strike, or when the third strike is called with first base occupied and less than two out;
- When the batsman bunts foul after two strikes;
- When the batsman bats illegally;
- When the batsman fails to bat in proper order;
- When the batsman is struck by his own missed strike;
- When the batsman interferes with the catcher.

To the Fielder:

- Who actually makes a put-out in regular manner;
- Who did, or should have, made the play on an infield fly;
- Nearest the ball when a runner is declared out for being struck by a fair batted ball;
- At the base for which a runner is called out for leaving too soon.

Note: When a runner leaves his base too soon on a pitched ball and on the same pitch the batsman is put out before he reaches first base for the third out in an inning, score the put-out of the batsman and disregard the runner who left his base too soon. If the batsman is not put out before he reaches first base, then score the put-out for leaving the base too soon and show the batsman as having been left on first base.

The Fifth column shall show the number of put-outs in which each player Assists.

An Assist shall be credited:

To each player who handles the ball in any series of plays which result in the put-out of a base-runner. Only one Assist, and no more, shall be given to any player who handles the ball in any put-out. A player who has aided in a run-down, or other play of the kind, shall be credited with both an Assist and the Put-Out;

To each player who handles or throws the ball in such manner that a put-out would have resulted but for the error of a team-mate;

To a player who, by deflecting a batted ball, aids in a put-out;

To each player who handles the ball in a play which results in a base-runner being called out for interference, or for running out of the line;

To the catcher who, after dropping the third strike, throws the runner out at first base.

Do not credit an Assist to a fielder who makes a bad throw on which a runner trying to advance on it is put out. A play that follows an error is a new play and the player making an error is not entitled to an Assist unless he takes part in the new play.

Do not credit an Assist to the pitcher when a runner is put out in attempting to steal home on a legally pitched ball.

The Sixth column shall show the number of Errors made by each player.

An Error shall be recorded for each mis-play which prolongs the life of a batsman or a base-runner, or which allows a base-runner to make one or more bases, when perfect play would have resulted in his being put out.

An Error shall be charged to any player who fails to touch the base after receiving the ball in time to retire a runner on a force play or when a runner is compelled to return to a base.

An Error shall be charged to a catcher if he drops or misses a third strike and allows the man who was the batsman to reach first base.

An Error shall be charged to a fielder if a base-runner advances a base through his failure to stop, or try to stop, a ball accurately thrown to a base, providing there was occasion for the throw. Where more than one player may take the play, the scorer shall determine which player shall be charged with the Error.

An Error shall be charged to a catcher or an infielder who in an attempt to complete a double play, throws so wild that an additional base be gained.

An Error shall be charged to a fielder who drops a thrown ball when by holding it he would have completed a double play.

An Error shall not be charged against a catcher for a wild throw in an attempt to prevent a stolen base, unless because of such wild throw the base-runner advances an extra base.

An Error shall not be charged against a fielder dropping a fly ball if the ball be recovered and a play made in time to make a force play.

THE SUMMARY

The Summary shall contain:

1—The score by innings and the final score.

2—The number of stolen bases and by whom.

A Stolen Base shall be credited to a base-runner whenever he advances base unaided by a base hit, a put-out, or a fielding or a battery error subject to the following conditions:

He shall not be credited with a stolen base if he over-slides the base and is put out.

He shall not be credited with a stolen base if the fielder receiving the throw from the catcher makes an error on the play, which if played properly would have resulted in the runner being put out.

He shall not be credited with a stolen base if the fielding side makes no attempt to play him, unless the fielding side refused to make the play in order to prevent the advance of another runner.

3—The number of Sacrifice Hits, and by whom made.

A Sacrifice Hit shall be credited to a batsman who advances a runner by a bunt on which he is retired or would have been retired but for an error. If in the judgment of the scorer the batsman could not have been retired at first base by perfect fielding he shall be credited with a base hit.

A Sacrifice shall be credited to the batsman who bats a fly ball on which a run is scored and on which he is retired or would have been retired but for an error.

4—The number of Two-Base Hits and by whom made.

5—The number of Three-Base Hits and by whom made.

6—The number of Home Runs and by whom made.

The length of a hit shall be determined by the number of bases the hitter advances without the aid of an error or misplay by the fielding team, or as the result of a play being made on another runner. If a batter, in attempting to stretch a hit, over-slides a base and is tagged out, he shall not be credited with having made that base.

When in the final inning of a game and the winning run on base, the hitter drives in that run, he shall be credited with the number of bases necessary to score that run, but no more, except that if the game is terminated by a Home Run batted out of the playing field, the hitter shall be credited with a Home Run, providing he legally touches each base in regular order.

7—The number of Double and Triple plays made and the players participating in the same.

8—The number of Runs Batted In and by whom.

Runs Batted In are runs scored on safe hits, sacrifice hits, outfield put-outs, and when the run is forced over by reason of the batsman becoming a base-runner. With less than two out, if an error is made on a play on which a runner from third base would ordinarily score, credit the batsman with a Run Batted In.

9—The number of innings, or parts of an inning, pitched by each pitcher. Parts of an inning to be determined by number of outs—One out, one-third inning; Two out, two-thirds inning.

10—The number of hits made off each pitcher.

11—The number of opponents struck out by each pitcher.

12—The number of Bases on Balls given by each pitcher.

13—The number of Wild Pitches by each pitcher.

14—The names of batsmen Hit by Pitched Ball and by whom.

15—The number of Passed Balls by each catcher.

16—The time of the game.

17—The names of the umpires and scorer.

PERCENTAGES

To determine the percentage of Games Won and Lost, divide the total number of games played into the number of games Won.

To determine batting averages, divide the total Times at Bat into the number of Hits.

To determine fielding averages, divide the total number of put-outs, assists and errors into the total number of put-outs and assists.

In all cases where the remaining fraction is one-half or more, give the full point.

How to Arrange Schedules

Arranging schedules is a simple matter, no matter how many teams you may have, provided you wish to play a round-robin, that is, every team playing every other team, with the winner decided on a percentage basis.

You can figure the length of your schedule by subtracting one from the number of teams. Thus, an eight-team league will require seven games for each club to play every other one, etc.

The key schedules given herewith cover leagues of 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 12 teams. Leagues of 9 or 11 teams use the schedule for the next higher number, with the club drawing a bye and remaining idle when there is no team to correspond to the number of its opponents.

All teams in the league are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. The number corresponds to that shown in the schedule, which is as follows:

5 TEAMS	6—2	1—7	5—7	1—4
	5—3	3—5	8—3	2—6
1—2	4—1	4—6	6—1	3—9
3—4			2—4	5—7
	5—2	2—7		8—10
2—3	3—1	3—6	5—8	
5—1	4—6	4—5	6—3	1—5
			2—7	2—3
3—5			4—1	4—8
4—2	7 TEAMS	8 TEAMS		6—10
			1—3	7—9
4—5	1—2	1—2	2—5	
3—1	3—4	3—4	4—7	1—6
	5—6	5—6	6—8	2—7
5—2		7—8		3—10
1—4	1—3			4—5
	2—4	2—3		8—9
	5—7	4—5	10 TEAMS	
6 TEAMS		6—7		
	1—4	8—1	1—2	1—7
1—2	2—6		3—4	2—8
3—4	3—7	3—5	5—6	3—5
5—6		2—6	7—8	4—10
	1—5	4—8	9—10	6—9
2—3	2—3	7—1		
4—5	6—7		1—3	1—8
6—1		4—6	2—4	2—9
		7—3	5—9	3—6
3—6	1—6	8—2	6—8	4—7
4—2	2—5		7—10	5—10
5—1	4—7	1—5		

HOW TO ARRANGE SCHEDULES

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1—9	1—3	1—6	1—9	1—11
2—10	2—5	2—3	2—10	2—12
3—7	4—6	4—5	3—11	3—7
4—6	7—9	7—12	4—12	4—8
5—8	8—11	8—9	5—7	5—9
	10—12	10—11	6—8	6—10
1—10				
2—5	1—4	1—7	1—10	1—12
3—8	2—6	2—8	2—11	2—7
4—9	3—5	3—9	3—12	3—8
6—7	7—10	4—10	4—7	4—9
	8—12	5—11	5—8	5—10
	9—11	6—12	6—9	6—11
12 TEAMS				
1—2	1—5	1—8		
3—4	2—4	2—9		
5—6	3—6	3—10		
7—8	7—11	4—11		
9—10	8—10	5—12		
11—12	9—12	6—7		

Explanations and Interpretations

OF THE

OFFICIAL SOFTBALL RULES

BY

HUBERT G. JOHNSON, *Official Interpreter, Joint Rules Committee*

For Interpretation of the Rules

Address (enclosing self-addressed stamped envelope)

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Detroit, Mich.

In requesting interpretations of particular plays or situations, be sure to state all the facts; the inning in which the matter occurred, the number of outs, the number and location of men on the bases, any or all of these things may have a bearing upon the correct answer to the question.

Do not make a general request for "The interpretations of the Rules of Softball." All of the published interpretations are found in the Softball Rules Books.

Softball is the result of unifying the rules of several games designed to offer a recreational outlet to a naturally baseball minded people who have neither the time, playing space or equipment to play baseball. To avoid confusion the rules of baseball have been used verbatim whenever possible and the same terminology has been used throughout the rules and the interpretations.

READING RULES

Words are used in their ordinary accepted meaning, unless the word has a peculiar meaning when used in connection with a particular sport. For example—the words "Bat," "Hit" and "Strike" may in many cases be used interchangeably, but in Softball and Baseball they have three separate and distinct meanings.

Rules are of two kinds, those which describe the game and how it is played, and those which fix penalties for violations of the rules of the game or for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Each rule and section has been made for a specific purpose.

To properly understand any rule it is necessary to know what particular action that rule was made to produce or to prevent.

Be sure to read all of the rule carefully. Omitting any part or word in any section may change the meaning.

Do not read into the rule more than is actually stated.

Whenever reference is made to another rule or section, both must be read together in order to obtain the proper meaning or application of the rule.

GROUND AND SPECIAL RULES

Whenever a ground rule, or other modification of the official rules, is made, such ground rule or modification should be reduced to writing and should be either posted at the field or should be written upon the score sheet and be signed by the team managers. This will materially reduce the number of controversies and will enable protest boards to know the exact conditions under which a game was played.

Where Leagues are operating upon fields which require special rules, the special rules for each field should be made a part of the league regulations.

When games are played in a private park, the home team shall notify the opposing manager and the umpires of any ground or special rules. If the visiting team objects, the umpire, or umpires, shall fix the ground rules.

When games are played upon neutral fields, the team managers should agree upon the ground rules and upon the failure of the managers to agree, the umpires shall fix the ground rules.

Whenever any modification of the official rules is made, or agreed upon, the umpire shall, before the start of the contest, announce to both the players and the spectators the special conditions under which the game is to be played.

PROTESTS

No Protest Board or Commissioner should entertain or consider any protest based solely on a decision which involved accuracy of judgment on the part of the umpire. Such matters are, whether a batted ball was fair or foul; a base-runner was safe or out; a pitched ball was a strike or a ball; whether a pitch was or was not legal; whether a base-runner did or did not touch a base; whether a base-runner did or did not leave his base too soon; whether a fly ball was or was not caught; whether a fly ball was or was not an infield-fly; whether there had or had not been an interference, or any other matter involving the accuracy of the umpire's judgment.

Protests may be considered on matters which involve a misinterpretation of the playing rules.

Whenever a protestable matter arises during a game, the captain or manager of the offended team should immediately notify the umpires and the opposing manager that the game is being continued under protest. This will enable all interested parties to take notice of the conditions surrounding the making of the decision and will aid in the proper determination of the issue. The formal protest may be filed later in accordance with the league regulations.

In the absence of a league ruling fixing the time limit in which a protest must be filed, a protest should be considered if filed within a reasonable time depending upon the nature of the case and the difficulty of obtaining the information on which to base the protest.

Protests on matters other than eligibility of players should be filed within 48 hours of the scheduled time of the game in which the protestable matter arose.

Time for filing all protests may, however, be fixed by league or tournament rule.

A formal protest should contain: the date, time and place of the game, the names of the teams, the names of the umpires and scorer, the rule and section of the Official Rules, or the local rule, under which the protest is made, the decision and conditions surrounding the making of the decision and all the essential facts involved in the matter protested.

When a protest for the mis-interpretation of a playing rule is allowed, the game shall be re-played from the point at which the improper decision was made and with the decision corrected.

When a protest for ineligibility is allowed the game should be forfeited to the opponent of the offending team, if, however, it is shown that the protesting team had knowledge of the offending player's ineligibility and failed to notify the opponent that they were playing the questionable player under protest, then the ineligible player should be removed from the team roster and the game shall be re-played.

Highly technical protests and those which could have no effect on subsequent play or the final result of the game should be discouraged.

Rule 3. EQUIPMENT

Question—Sometimes bats are found to be slightly over the size specified in the rule. Does this make the bat illegal?

Answer—Bats will absorb a certain amount of moisture. One sixteenth of an inch is allowed for expansion after manufacture. A bat which does not measure more than 2 and 3/16 inches in diameter is legal.

Question—What is an Official Softball?

Answer—The Committee has set up certain specifications as to contents and construction, as well as size and weight. The condensed specifications for an official ball are shown in Sec. 2 of Rules 3.

Question—Is it necessary that gloves be worn by players?

Answer—No. The rule shows what kind of gloves may be worn by players, and prohibits excessively long lacing or baskets between the thumb and body of a mitt or glove.

Question—What is the penalty for the use of an illegal bat or glove?

Answer—There is no penalty which can affect play. The illegal equipment must be thrown out. If it is again used the offending player may be removed from the game.

Question—Must masks be worn by catchers?

Answer—Masks must be worn by all senior catchers; and senior women catchers must also wear a body protector.

Question—Must pitchers wear a certain type of uniform?

Answer—Only in night games. When playing under lights, the pants, shirt and sweat-shirt must be of the same dark color with no lettering or trimming on the front.

Rule 4. PLAYERS

Question—Is it permissible to station a fielder outside the foul lines?

Answer—No. All of the fielding team, except the catcher, must be on fair ground when the ball is pitched.

Question—When a substitute runner is placed on the bases, does the original player have to leave the game as in other substitutions?

Answer—Ordinarily, yes; but the opposing manager may consent to the return of the original player.

Question—Can a pitcher, taken from the box to play some other position, return to the pitching position later in the game?

Answer—Yes, but each substitute pitcher, and the same pitcher each time he returns to the mound, must pitch until the first batsman to face him is either put out or has become a base-runner.

Question—Is there any penalty for failing to report or announce the substitution of a player?

Answer—There is no penalty which affects the playing of the game. A player is in the game and his acts are legal when he takes position as shown by the latter part of Section 6.

Rule 5. THE GAME

Question—Is it necessary that a championship game go the full seven innings?

Answer—No. All games which affect the standing of teams are considered championship games. The rule requiring such games to go the full seven innings was abandoned several years ago because it was an open inducement to stalling and sometimes rioting.

Question—Does the score always revert to the last completed inning when a game is terminated before the regulation seven innings have been played?

Answer—No. The score stands as it was at the time the game was called if the home team, or the team second to bat, has equalled the score, or has more runs than the team first to bat, when the game is called in any uncompleted inning after $4\frac{1}{2}$ innings have been played.

Question—Is a drawn, or tied, game replayed from the beginning or is that game continued until the tie is broken?

Answer—The game is replayed just as though it were a postponed game.

Rule 8. PITCHING

Question—When is the pitcher legally in pitching position?

Answer—Whenever he has taken position as shown in (a) of this rule and the catcher is in position as defined in Rule 2.

Question—What is meant by facing the batsman?

Answer—That the whole body, from feet to head, should face the batsman. Taking a position with the feet and body facing the first or third base line and simply turning the head toward the batsman is not sufficient.

Question—Where in front of the body must the ball be held in both hands?

Answer—Anywhere. The arms may be extended full length downward, out in front level with or above the shoulders, or the elbows may be bent and the ball held against the body.

Question—How long must the pitcher remain in the position shown in (a) before starting to pitch?

Answer—For at least one second. The feet and arms must come to a full and complete stop in this position before taking one hand off the ball to start the wind-up.

Question—When and how must the pitcher take his one step forward?

Answer—The step must be taken simultaneously with the final delivery of the ball. It must be toward the batsman, not toward the first or third base line so as to produce a cross-fire delivery.

Question—When does a legal pitch begin?

Answer—When one hand is taken off the ball. After this the motion of the pitching arm must be continuous until the ball has left the hand of the pitcher.

Question—What is meant by an “underhand delivery”?

Answer—That the ball must be pitched underhand, not thrown. A Softball pitch should resemble a horseshoe pitch.

Question—How much of a wind-up may a pitcher use?

Answer—Any amount and style he desires. He may lift one leg and rotate the body. The ball may be taken round the body and out of the batsman's sight. If, however, the body is rotated in the back-swing it must be rotated in the opposite direction in the actual delivery, and the ball should be released when the shoulders are again approximately parallel with a line from first to third bases. In the so-called “Windmill” pitch, the pitcher may make as many revolutions of the arm as he desires before releasing the ball.

Question—Why must the wrist be kept the same or less distance from the body than the elbow in the delivery swing of the arm?

Answer—To force the pitcher to pitch the ball, not throw it. In making an underhand **THROW** the forearm is rotated outward bringing the elbow in toward and the wrist and hand away from the body. This wording also prevents the wide sweeping delivery in which the wrist is farther from the body than the elbow.

Rule 9. ILLEGAL PITCHES

Question—Are there “balks” in Softball?

Answer—All the illegal pitches defined in this rule may be termed “balks.” While the Committee prefers that these offenses be called illegal pitches, the “illegal pitch” and the “balk” are one and the same thing and carry the same penalty.

Question—Can a run be scored when an illegal pitch is called?

Answer—Yes. A runner on third base is advanced the same as any other runner when an illegal pitch is called.

Question—Should an illegal pitch be called if the pitched ball strikes the ground or bounces before it reaches home plate?

Answer—Not always. (5) of this rule was designed to prevent delivering the ball in such manner that the batter cannot hit it. A distinction should be made between a deliberate rolling or bouncing of the ball and simply a poorly executed attempt to make a legal delivery.

Rules 13 to 20. BATTING

Question—Must the batting order as given at the start of the game be followed throughout even though a substitute may play some other position than that of the player for whom he is substituted?

Answer—Yes. A substitute takes the place in the batting order of the player for whom he is substituted regardless of whether the positions of the players may be shifted.

Question—When a player is batting out of turn, can the proper batsman be called out before the improper batsman has completed his time at bat?

Answer—No. If the error is discovered before the improper batsman has been put out or has become a base-runner, the proper batsman should replace the man at the plate and take the balls and strikes called against the improper batsman.

Question—It is No. 8's turn to bat; No. 9 bats in his place and gets a hit; the mistake is discovered before the ball has been pitched to No. 1, who is out, No. 8 or No. 9?

Answer—No. 8 is out for failing to bat in his proper place. Since no act of the improper batsman is legal, No. 9 must now return to the plate and bat in his proper place.

Question—The same situation as above except that the ball has been pitched to No. 1. Who is out?

Answer—No one. The rule is not enforced if the ball has been pitched to a succeeding batsman. No. 1 is now batting in his proper place. No. 2 follows No. 1 and the order is restored. No. 8 has simply lost his turn at bat.

Question—No. 5 bats in the place of No. 2 with runners on first and second bases; No. 5 gets a hit scoring the man on second, and the man on first stops at second base; the mistake is discovered before the ball has been

pitched to No. 6. Who is out, how are the runners affected, and who is now the proper batsman?

Answer—No. 2 is out. No. 5 returns to the bench; the other runners return to first and second bases; No. 3 is now the proper batsman; No. 5 will come up again in his proper position.

Question—Same situation as above except that the ball has been pitched to No. 6. Who is out?

Answer—No one. Nos. 2, 3, and 4 have simply lost their turn at bat until they are again reached in regular order. No. 7 will follow No. 6.

Notice in the above cases that only one player is called out and that the object is to restore the order as soon as possible.

Question—Is it permissible for a batsman to change from one side of the plate to the other during the same time at bat?

Answer—Yes. He can change as often as he likes, provided he does not make the change while the pitcher has the ball and is in pitching position.

Question—Is the batter always called out for swinging at a pitched ball when he has one or both feet on the ground outside the batter's box?

Answer—No. The batsman is not to be called out unless he, in some way, hits the ball.

Question—When an attempt to "bunt" results in a fly ball, is the batter called out under the infield-fly rule?

Answer—No. A bunted ball, like the line drive, is not considered an infield-fly.

Question—Must the third strike be caught in order to put the batsman out?

Answer—Yes, unless first base is occupied and less than two out. If two are out with a runner on first base, or if first base is not occupied, the third strike must be caught or the runner must be thrown out or tagged before he reaches first base.

Rule 21, Sec. 5. THE FORCE-OUT

Question—Can a runner, already on the bases, start a forced play?

Answer—No. A forced play can be started only by the batsman becoming a base-runner.

Question—If a runner is called out for leaving his base too soon, will it destroy a forced play on a preceding runner who otherwise would have been forced out?

Answer—No. A forced play can be destroyed only by some act on the part of the team then in the field.

Question—Is a play on a runner who is returning after a caught fly ball, or on a runner who has failed to touch a base, considered a forced play?

Answer—The play on a runner returning to his base after a caught fly ball is never a forced play.

The play on a runner who has failed to touch a base may be, if the play is at the base to which a runner is forced to go when the batter bats a FAIR ball.

Examples:—1—The play on the batter going to first base is always a forced play.

2—If a runner on first base when the ball was batted failed to touch second in passing, the play at second base would be a forced play, if this same runner had touched second base and missed third in passing, the play at third base would not be a forced play.

Rule 24. OVERTHROW

This rule is simply a definition of an overthrow, and shows that the advance of runners in a case of an overthrow is determined by the base occupied at the time of the pitch preceding the play in which the overthrow occurred, regardless of where the runner actually was at the time of the overthrow. How far runners can advance in case of an overthrow is shown in Section 8 of Rule 27.

Rule 25. LEGAL ORDER OF BASES

Question—Is a runner permitted to run bases in reverse order?

Answer—No. When the batter becomes a base-runner, by hitting a fair ball, or in any other way, he must start toward first base.

When a runner has acquired legal right to a base by touching it, he must not run bases in reverse order either for the purpose of confusing the fielders or making a travesty of the game. It must be remembered, however, that a runner cannot acquire legal title to a base so long as there is a runner between that base and the next who has not been put out.

Question—May a runner who was on second (or any other) base advance to within a few feet of the next base and then return to the base he had left?

Answer—Yes, unless he is forced to advance by reason of the batsman becoming a base-runner. A runner is always on the last base touched until he touches the next base while it is unoccupied. If a runner on second base runs down and touches third base, he may return to second base if there is a runner between third and home who has not been put out.

Question—Runners on first and second bases; batter makes a long hit; both runners score but the runner who was on second fails to touch third base; a play is made; the runner beats the play back to third base and later scores; both runs are allowed. Is this correct?

Answer—No. The runner who had been on first base should have been called out for passing the preceding runner. There is no way in which a runner can score ahead of a runner who precedes him in the batting order. Had the man who was on second base failed to beat the play to third base and been called out, then the man who had been on first base would have scored regardless of the fact that the preceding runner had not actually been put out until after the succeeding runner had touched home plate.

Rule 27. ENTITLED TO BASES

Some confusion seems to exist as to the advancing of runners when the ball is "dead." It must be remembered that the ball must be dead if runners are to be entitled to advance **WITHOUT LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT**. The ball is dead under all sections of this rule with the following exceptions: In Sections 1 and 2, a runner who has been awarded a base on balls and other runners who are forced to advance because of this cannot be put out before they reach the bases to which they are entitled, but having reached these bases they may advance farther, or be put out, at their own risk. Under Section 4, runners are limited to one base, but the ball remains in play and they must make that one base at their own risk. Under Section 5, the ball is dead only as to the man interfered with until he reaches the next base. Under Section 7, the ball is in play after the runners reach the bases to which they are entitled.

Question—Is it necessary that the ball be caught or actually stopped in order to enforce the penalty under Section 7?

Answer—No. It is sufficient if the ball is touched. There is no penalty unless the cap or glove actually touches the ball.

Question—Is there a conflict between Sec. 5 of Rule 22, Sec. 5 of Rule 26, Sec. 1 of Rule 27, and Sec. 7 of Rule 28?

Answer—No. The apparent conflict results from a failure to realize that the batsman becomes a base-runner immediately he completes his time at bat and that all the base-running rules apply to him while he is between home and first base.

Putting all the foregoing sections together it would read thus: When a fairly batted ball hits a base-runner before touching a fielder, the base-runner hit is out; the batsman gets credit for a hit, becomes a base-runner and is entitled to first base; no other runner can advance unless forced to do so by reason of the batsman becoming a base-runner; the ball is dead, and base-runners who have attempted to advance, except the man put out and runners forced to advance, may return to their bases without liability to be put out.

Rule 28. RETURNING TO BASES

The ball is "dead" under all sections of this rule. Under Sections 1, 2, and 6 all runners must return to their bases. Under the other sections, runners must return unless they are forced to advance by reason of the batsman becoming a base-runner.

Rule 29. BASE-RUNNERS ARE OUT

Question—Is a ball legally caught when it hits the body and is then smothered and held with the hands against the body?

Answer—Yes. The ball is legally caught whenever the hands are employed in holding it.

Question—Is a hitter out if the fielder juggles a fly ball in catching it so long as it does not touch the ground?

Answer—Yes. It makes no difference how many times the fly ball is juggled or how many fielders handle the ball so long as it is finally held before touching the ground.

Question—Why is a “fair fly” Out placed under “Base-Runners are Out” and a “foul fly” Out under “Batsman is Out”?

Answer—Because he ceases to be a batsman and becomes a base-runner the instant he hits a fair ball. He does not become a base-runner when he hits a foul ball, even though he may run on the chance that the ball will be fair.

Question—Can the ball be juggled by a fielder in making a play at a base?

Answer—No. In case of either a forced play at a base or tagging a runner the ball must be firmly held after touching the base or the runner. A runner is not out at first base, or on any forced play, if he touches the base before the ball is finally held by the fielder, and a runner is not out when tagged if the fielder juggles the ball after tagging him.

Question—What is meant by an appeal play, and what plays come under this head?

Answer—An appeal play is one in which the umpire does not make a decision until his attention has been called to the play by a member of the fielding team.

Such instances are:

When a runner fails to touch a base in regular or reverse order. (Sec. 14.)

When a runner leaves his base too soon on a fly ball that has been caught. (Sec. 21.)

When a runner, after rounding first base, starts for second and then returns to first base. (Sec. 20.)

In these cases the umpire should not make a decision, or in any way indicate that the play is not complete, until the ball is held on the base or the runner is actually touched with the ball. The team in the field should be vigilant and not expect the umpire to take part in the play.

Question—Should a runner be called out for leaving his base too soon if the catcher is out of position?

Answer—No. Subdivision b. of Rule 8 shows that the pitcher is not in position to pitch unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.

Question—With the pitcher and catcher in position, the pitcher makes a motion to pitch, the runners step off their bases, but the pitcher does not let go of the ball, should the runners be called out for leaving their bases too soon?

Answer—No. The rule says that a runner is out if he leaves his base too soon on a LEGALLY pitched ball. This is an illegal pitch, a ball should be called in favor of the batsman and all the runners advanced one base.

Question—If a runner leaves his base legally after the pitch, should he be called out for being off his base if the pitcher stays on the mound and receives the throw-back in pitching position?

Answer—No. The pitcher can force the runner back by playing him, or he must allow the runner time to get back. If the pitcher tries a quick return pitch before the runner is back, the runner is not compelled to go back if the ball is hit fairly.

Question—Some pitchers, after a batted ball, get possession of the ball and run to the pitcher's box claiming that the runner must stop as soon as the pitcher is in position. Is this correct?

Answer—No. The pitcher cannot stop a play already in action by simply getting the ball in pitching position.

Question—Is a fielder permitted to intentionally drop, or fail to catch, a fly ball in order to make a double play?

Answer—Yes. This play can only be made when the batsman hits a short fly and fails to run it out. Many times a batsman, thinking to protect his team-mate on base, does not run out the play. Whenever this is done it is paving the way for a double play. The good player runs out everything.

Question—Runners are on first and second bases, one man out, batsman hits an infield-fly; short-stop drops the ball; runner on second starts for third and is tagged out by the short-stop who has retrieved the ball. Is the runner out?

Answer—Yes. The batsman was out, but bases can be run or plays made as on any other batted ball. Had the same thing occurred with two men out, the runners would have been forced to advance as on any other fair hit ball, and the runner, not the batsman, should be called out. It should be noted also, the infield-fly rule is not in effect unless both first and second bases are occupied.

Question—With runners on first and second bases, the batsman hits to the third baseman, forcing the runner at third; the runner forced out cuts across the diamond and interferes with the third baseman's throw to complete a double play at first base. The runner going to first base is called out for the interference of his team-mate and the umpire orders runner who has made second on the play back to first. Was the umpire right?

Answer—Yes. When a base-runner has been put out he loses all rights on the playing field and must be careful to avoid interfering with plays being made on other runners. Base-runners are not permitted to advance when an interference has been declared.

Question—Is a fielder permitted to block a runner off a base?

Answer—Only when he actually has the ball in his possession. Otherwise it constitutes an interference and entitles the runner to the base.

Question—If a runner is going from first to second, or from second to third base and the batter interferes with the catcher, who is out, the batsman or the runner on whom the play is attempted?

Answer—The batsman. All runners must return to their bases. If, however, the runner on whom the play is made is put out, there is no penalty.

Question—If a runner is attempting to score from third base and the batsman interferes with the play, who is out?

Answer—The runner, unless it be the third out, in which case the batsman is called out. If the runner is called out, the batsman remains at the plate and other runners who were advancing on the play must return to their bases.

Rule 30. SCORING OF RUNS

Question—Can a runner, who was on third base at the time of the pitch, score on the throw-back from catcher to pitcher?

Answer—Yes. A runner on third base may score on a wild pitch, passed ball, or on the throw-back from the catcher to the pitcher.

Question—With the bases full and two out, the batter makes a three-base hit but fails to touch first base. Three runners are across home plate and the hitter on third base when the ball is relayed to first base and the hitter is called out. How many runs score?

Answer—None. After two are out, no runs can be scored on any play in which the hitter is called out before he reaches first base, or there is a force-out. If the hitter in this case had touched first base and missed second, then all runs would have scored that were across the plate before the play was made at second base.

Question—Runners are on second and third bases with two out; the batter hits a home run inside the park, all runners round the bases and cross home plate. The ball is played to third base and the man who was on second base is called out for failing to touch third base. How many runs score?

Answer—One. The man who had been the hitter could not score because a preceding runner failed to touch a base and was called out for the third out.

Question—Can runs be scored when the side is retired by a double play?

Answer—Yes, unless the second out of the double play was a force-out.

XV · Equipment and Construction *

Softball is not an expensive sport. The amount of equipment necessary is quite elastic; either more or less may be used, according to the discretion of the people setting up the diamond.

Once the field has been cleared and the diamond laid out, the next step is that of obtaining lumber for backstop and seating stands. While neither of these is absolutely essential towards the playing of the game, they add to its enjoyment. Without backstops different playing rules are sometimes necessary; the ball must be retrieved each time it gets past the catcher, and playing time is annoyingly wasted.

Drawings of softball equipment and details of construction and care follow. Four types of backstops and one style of bleachers are shown. *The illustrations are not drawn to scale*, but complete dimensions are given. Isometric drawings precede the drafted plans so that those intending to construct this equipment may find it easy to visualize their final products.

SMALL SOFTBALL BACKSTOP TYPE 1

METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION

1. Lay out and cut sections for the lap joints in 4" × 4" × 12'-0" posts.
2. Nail the 2" × 4" × 10'-0" braces in place with the 12 penny nails.
3. Put the 2" wire mesh on with the staples.
4. Lay out and dig the post holes.
5. Set the backstop in place and refill the holes with dirt.
6. Line the posts aplomb.
7. Bank and tamp the earth around the posts.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE AND UPKEEP

1. Paint woodwork with two coats of flat paint.
2. Bank and tamp the earth around the posts once every month.
3. Inspect all joints and staples once every two weeks.
4. Special efforts may be necessary to keep children from climbing on the backstop.
5. A coat of creosote or crank case oil on the parts under ground will help preserve them.

* Material in Chapter XV is used by permission of the National Youth Administration of the State of Illinois.

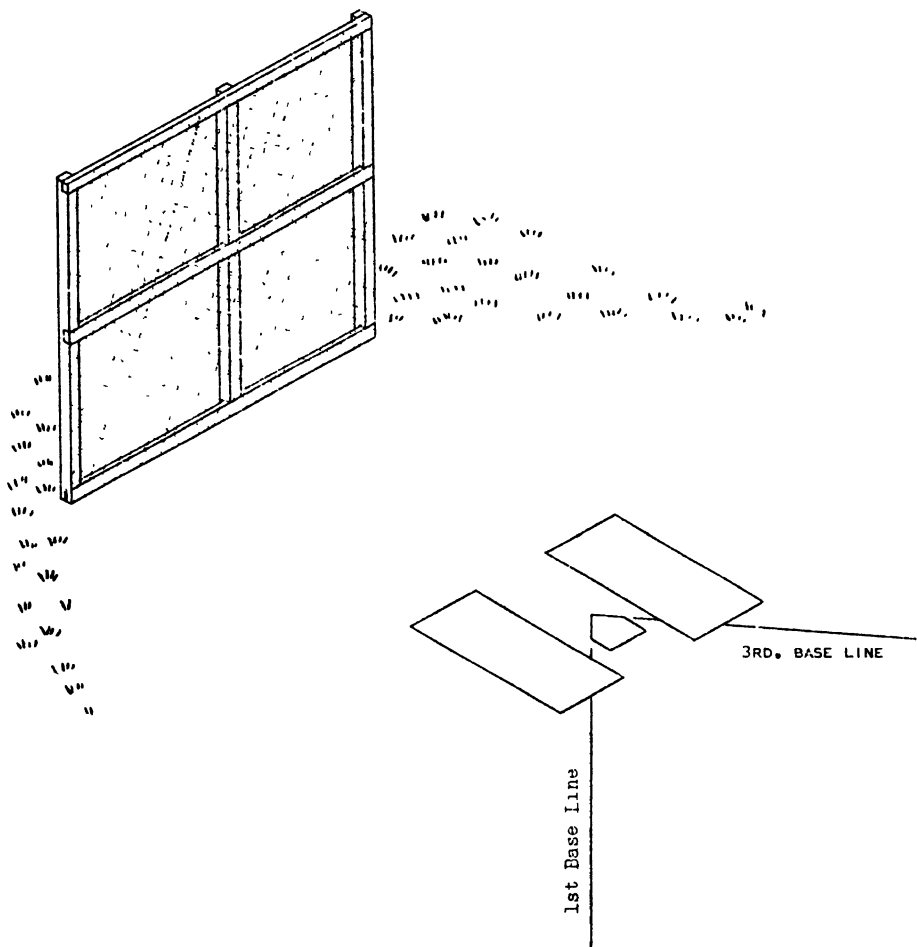


FIG. 2. Small Softball Backstop Type 1

MATERIALS NEEDED

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	NO. REQ'D.	REMARKS
1	Posts—4" × 4" × 12'-0"	3	Yellow Pine
2	Braces—2" × 4" × 10'-0"	3	" "
3	Cement Coated Common Nails	2 Lbs.	16 Penny
4	Wire Fencing—5' × 12'—Galvanized	2	16 Gauge 2" Mesh
5	Wire Staples	4 Lbs.	1" Long—15 Gauge
6	Paint	½ Gal.	Flat

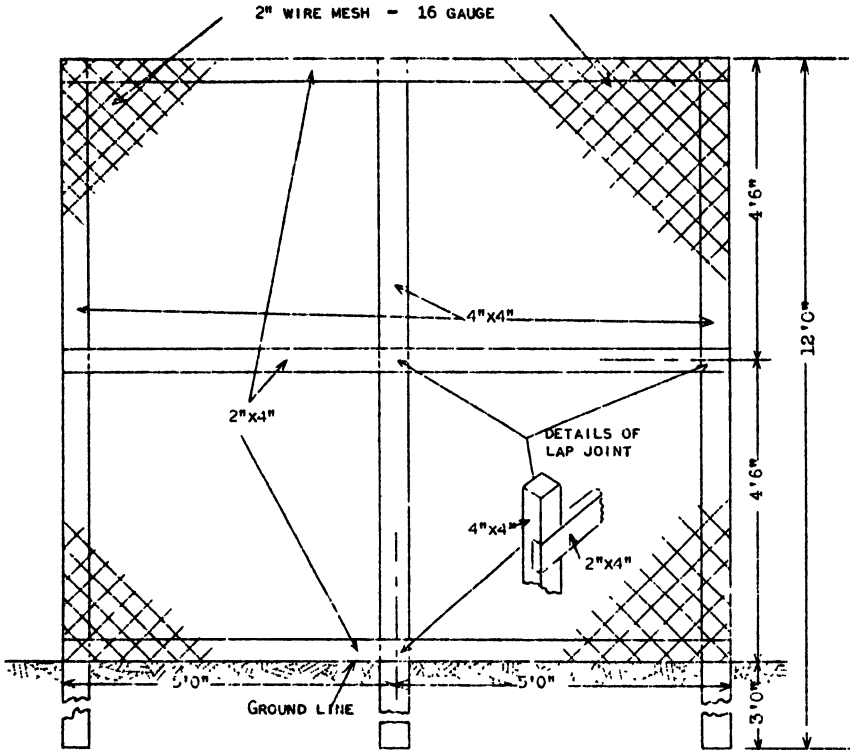


FIG. 3. Small Softball Backstop Type 1 (Construction Details)

COST OF MATERIALS

ITEM	REMARKS	COST
1	3 Pieces 4" × 4" × 12'-0"—No. 1 Common Yellow Pine	\$2.94
2	3 Pieces 2" × 4" × 10'-0"—No. 1 Common Yellow Pine	1.03
3	Cement Coated Common Nails—2 Lbs.—16 Penny	.16
4	Wire Fencing—2 Pieces—5' × 12'—16 Gauge— 2" Mesh—Galvanized	1.80
5	Wire Staples—4 Lbs.—1" Long—15 Gauge	.24
6	Paint—½ Gal.—Flat	1.75
Approximate Total Cost		\$7.92

Order materials from specifications given in "Remarks" Column of the "Cost of Materials" table.

SMALL SOFTBALL BACKSTOP TYPE 2

METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION

1. Lay out and cut sections for the lap joints in the three 4" \times 4" posts.
2. Nail the wooden cross braces to the three posts.
3. Lay out and dig the three post holes.
4. Set the posts in place and replace the earth.
5. Line the posts aplomb.
6. Bank and tamp the earth around the posts.
7. Nail on the wooden base boards.
8. Fasten the wire mesh in place with the staples.

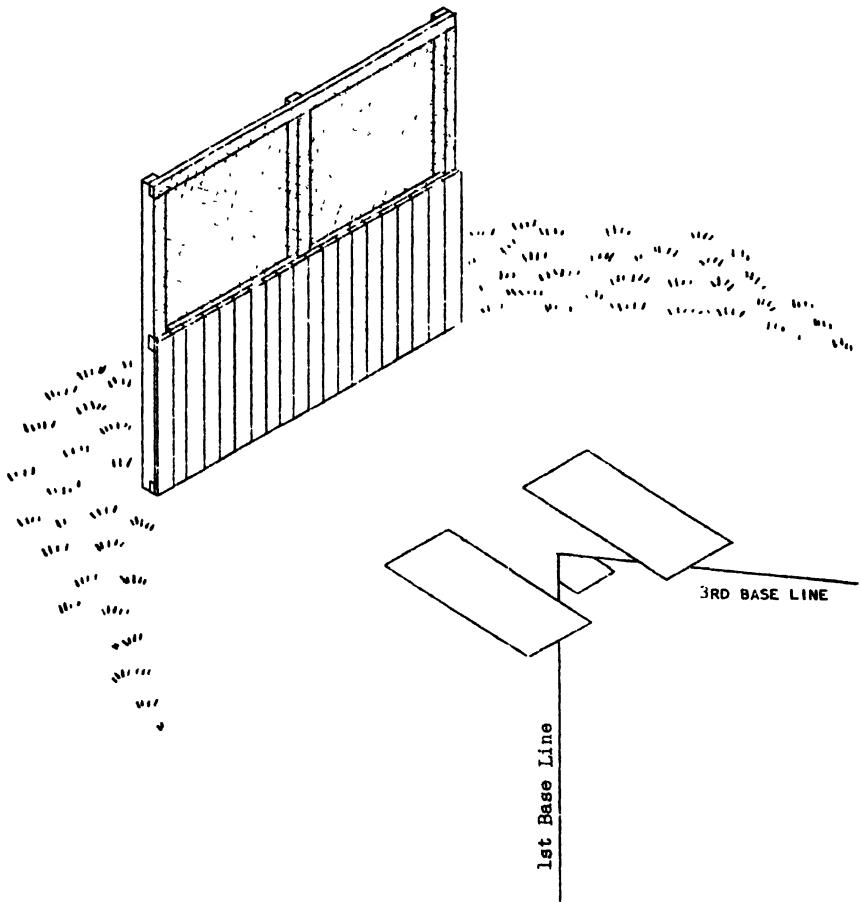


FIG. 4. Small Softball Backstop Type 2

SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE AND UPKEEP

1. Paint woodwork with two coats of flat paint.
2. Bank and tamp the earth around the posts once every month.
3. Inspect all joints, staples, and base boards once every two weeks.
4. Special efforts may be necessary to keep children from climbing on the backstop.
5. A coat of creosote or crank case oil on the parts under ground will help preserve them.

MATERIALS NEEDED

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	NO. REQ'D.	REMARKS
1	Posts—4" × 4" × 12'-0"	3	Yellow Pine
2	Braces—2" × 4" × 10'-0"	3	" "
3	Base boards—1" × 6" × 4'-8"	22	" "
4	Cement Coated Common Nails	2 Lbs.	16 Penny
5	Cement Coated Common Nails	2 Lbs.	8 Penny
6	Wire Fencing—5' × 12'	1	16 Gauge—2" Mesh
7	Wire Staples	3 Lbs.	1" Long—15 Gauge
8	Paint	½ Gal.	Flat

COST OF MATERIAL

ITEM	REMARKS	COST
1	3 Pieces—4" × 4" × 12'-0"—No. 1 Common Yellow Pine	\$2.94
2	3 Pieces—2" × 4" × 10'-0"—No. 1 Common Yellow Pine	1.03
3	8 Pieces—1" × 6" × 14'-0"—No. 1 Yellow Pine	3.81
4	Cement Coated Common Nails—2 Lbs.—16 Penny	.16
5	Cement Coated Common Nails—2 Lbs.—8 Penny	.16
6	Wire Fencing—2" Mesh—16 Gauge—1 piece 5' × 12'—Galvanized	.90
7	Wire Staples—1"—15 Gauge—3 Lbs.	.18
8	Paint—½ Gal.—Flat	1.50

Approximate Total Cost \$10.68

Order material from specifications given in "Remarks" Column of the "Cost of Materials" Table.

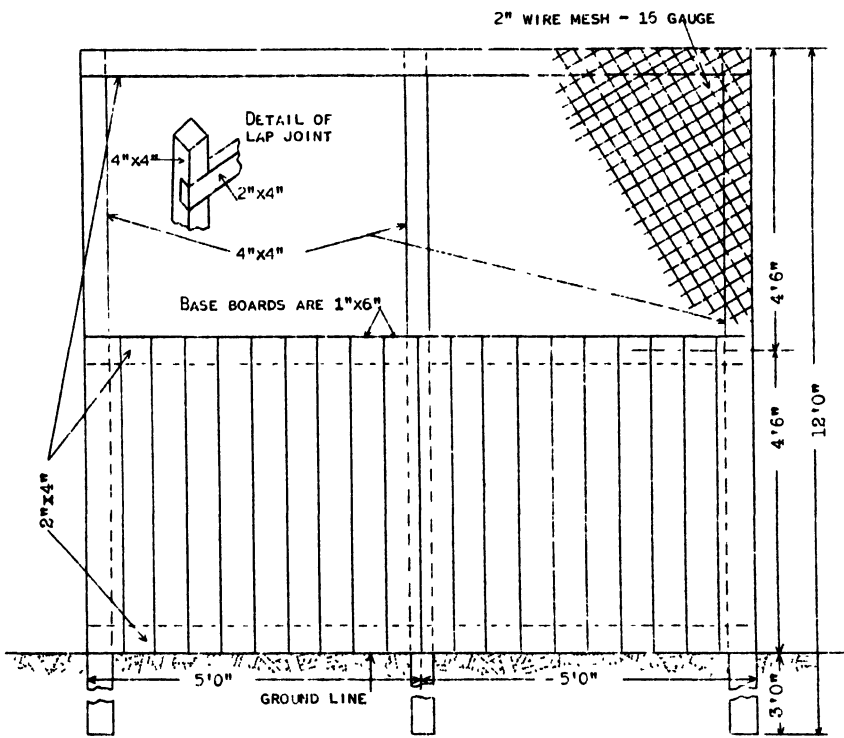


FIG. 5. Small Softball Backstop Type 2 (Construction Details)

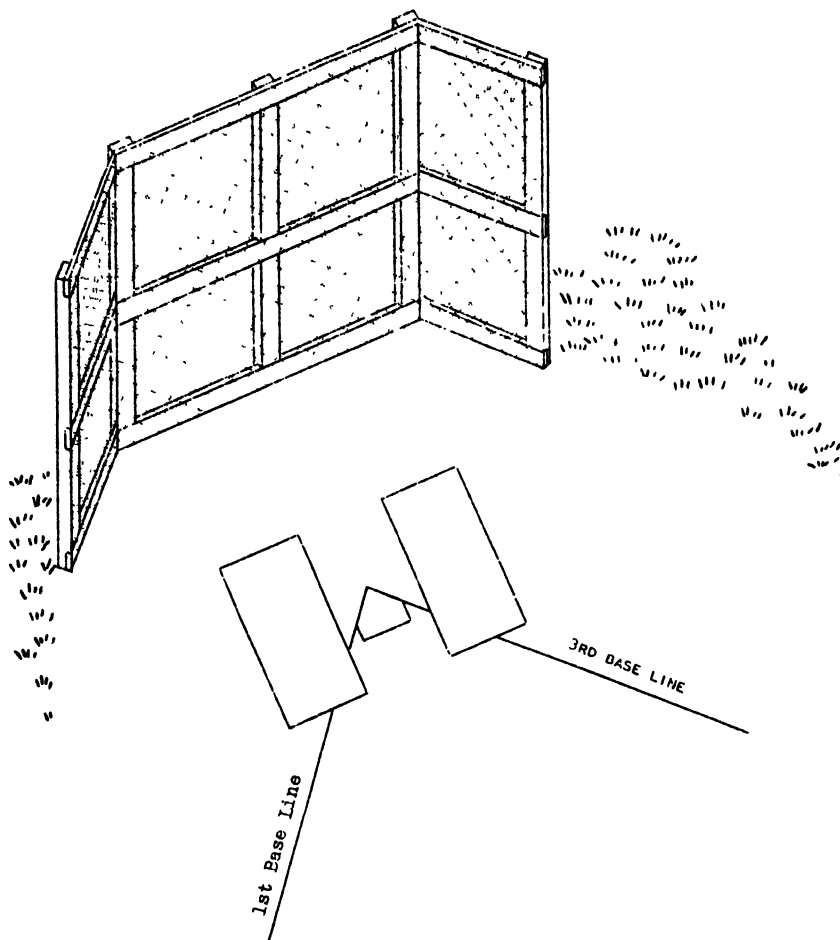


FIG. 6. Large Softball Backstop Type 1

LARGE SOFTBALL BACKSTOP TYPE 1

METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION

1. Lay out and cut the sections for the lap joints in the posts.
2. Nail the 10'-0" horizontal cross braces to the three middle posts.
3. Lay out and dig the five post holes.
4. Set the three center posts in place and refill the holes.
5. Line the posts aplomb; bank and tamp the earth around the posts.
6. Set the two end posts in position and refill the holes. Line these posts aplomb; bank and tamp the earth.
7. Lay out and cut each of the three remaining 2" \times 4" \times 10'-0" pieces into two 4'-0" lengths (approx.). (See detail of wing joint, Fig. 8).
8. Nail the wing cross braces in place.
9. Put on the wire mesh with the staples.

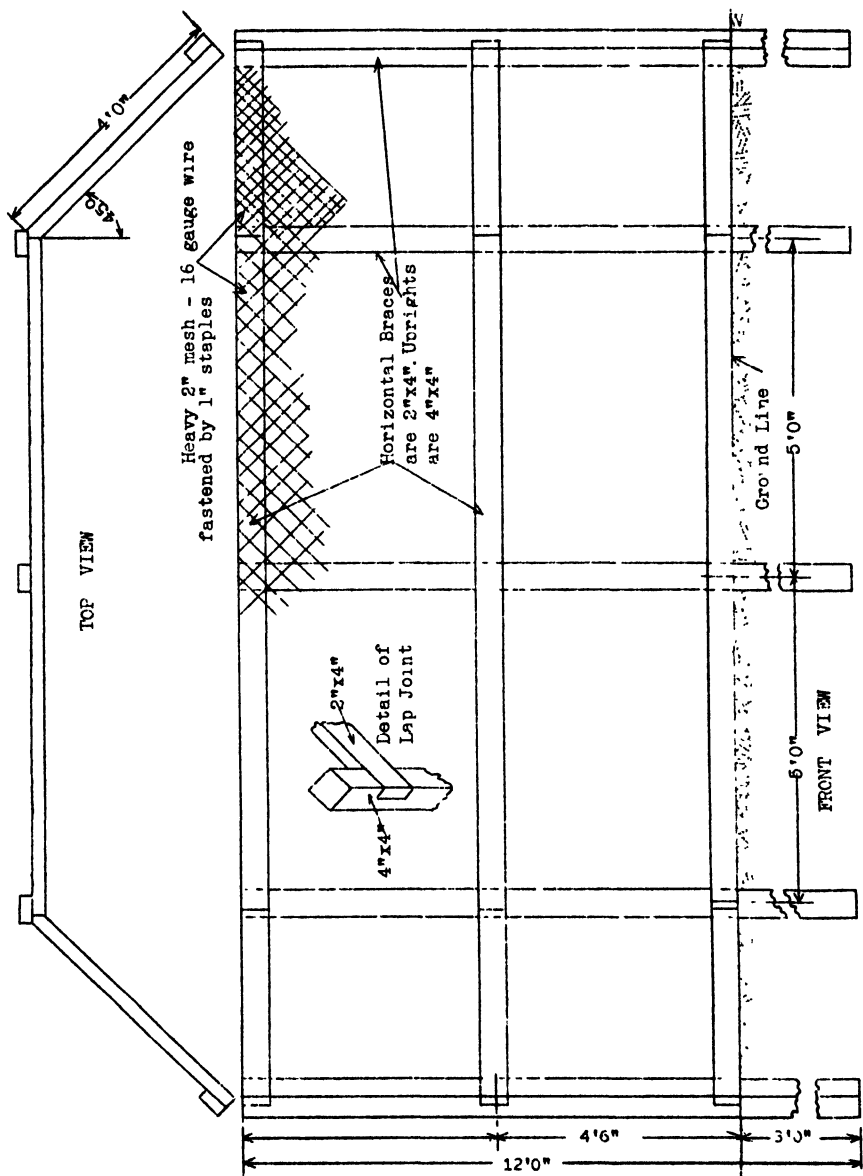


FIG. 7. Large Softball Backstop Type 1 (Construction Details)

SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE AND UPKEEP

- 1. Paint woodwork with two coats of flat paint.
- 2. Bank and tamp the earth around the posts once every month.
- 3. Inspect all joints and staples once every two weeks.
- 4. Special efforts may be necessary to keep children from climbing on the backstop.
- 5. A coat of creosote or crank case oil on the parts under ground will help preserve them.

MATERIALS NEEDED

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	NO. REQ'D.	REMARKS
1	Posts—4" × 4" × 12'-0"	5	Yellow Pine
2	Braces—2" × 4" × 10'-0"	6	" "
3	Cement Coated Common Nails	3 Lbs.	16 Penny
4	Wire Fencing—5' × 20'—Galvanized	2	16 Gauge—2" Mesh
5	Wire Staples	5 Lbs.	1" Long—15 Gauge
6	Paint	1 Gal.	Flat

COST OF MATERIALS

ITEM	REMARKS	COST
1	5 Pieces—4" × 4" × 12'-0"—No. 1 Common Yellow Pine	\$4.88
2	6 Pieces—2" × 4" × 10'-0"—No. 1 Common Yellow Pine	2.45
3	Cement Coated Common Nails—3 Lbs.—16 Penny	.24
4	2 Pieces—5' × 20'—Galvanized Wire Fencing—16 Gauge—2" Mesh	2.80
5	Wire Staples—5 Lbs.—1" Long—15 Gauge	.30
6	Paint—1 Gal.—Flat	2.50

Approximate Total Cost \$13.17

Order material from specifications given in "Remarks" Column of the "Cost of Materials" Table.

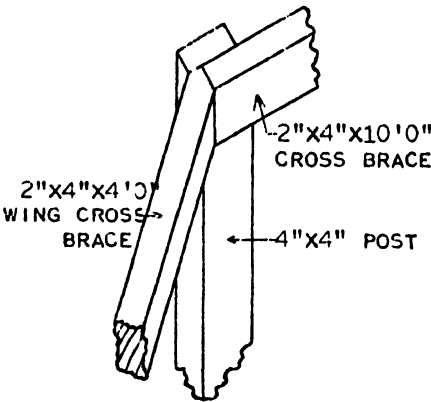


FIG. 8. Large Softball Backstop Type 1 (Wing Joint Detail)

LARGE SOFTBALL BACKSTOP TYPE 2

METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION

1. Lay out and cut the sections for the lap joints in the five posts.
2. Nail three 10'-0" wooden cross braces to the middle posts.
3. Lay out and dig the five post holes.
4. Set the three center posts in place and refill the holes. Line the posts aplomb; bank and tamp the earth.
5. Set the two end posts in position and refill the holes. Line these posts aplomb; bank and tamp the earth.
6. Lay out and cut each of the six side wing cross braces.
7. Nail these braces in place. (See detail of wing joint, Fig. 11.)
8. Nail on the wooden base boards.
9. Put on the wire mesh with the staples.

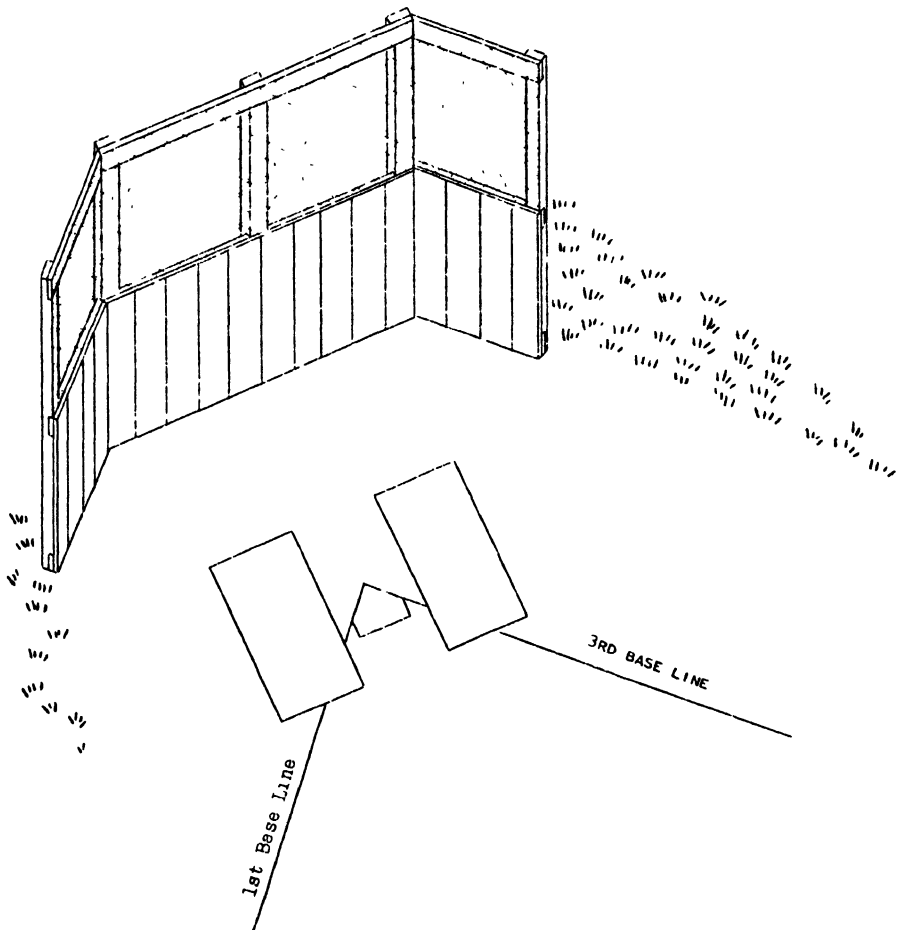


FIG. 9. Large Softball Backstop Type 2

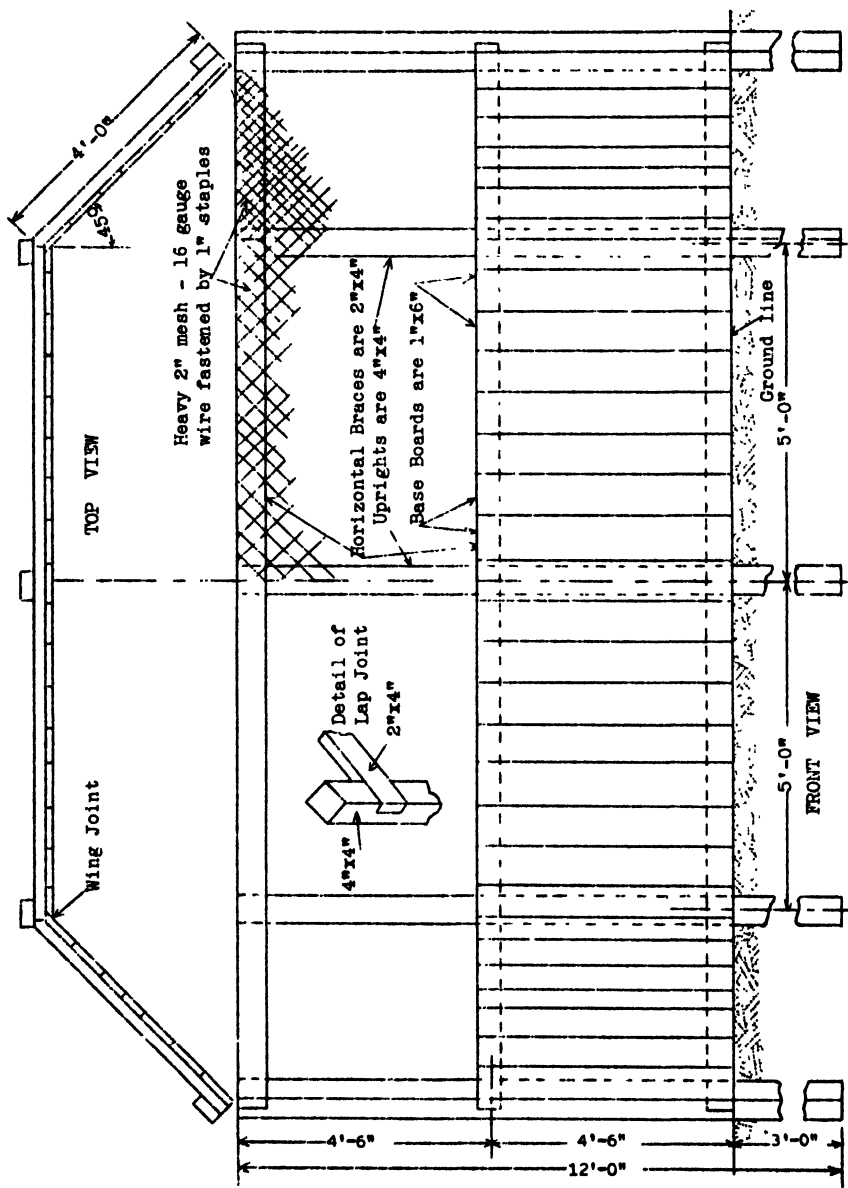


FIG. 10. Large Softball Backstop Type 2 (Construction Details)

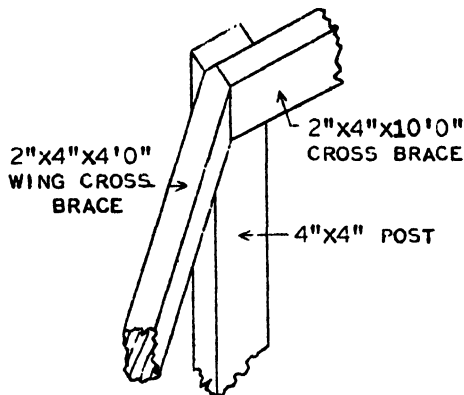


FIG. 11. Large Softball Backstop Type 2 (Wing Joint Detail)

SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE AND UPKEEP

1. Paint woodwork with two coats of flat paint.
2. Bank and tamp the earth around the posts once every month.
3. Inspect all joints, staples, and base boards once every two weeks.
4. Special efforts may be necessary to keep children from climbing on backstop.
5. Apply a coat of creosote or crank case oil to lengthen the life of the wood below the ground line.

MATERIALS NEEDED

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	NO. REQ'D.	REMARKS
1	Posts—4" × 4" × 12'-0"	5	Yellow Pine
2	Post Braces—2" × 4" × 10'-0"	6	" "
3	Base boards—1" × 6" × 4'-8"	39	" "
4	Cement Coated Nails—Common	3 Lbs	8 Penny
5	Cement Coated Nails—Common	3 Lbs.	16 Penny
6	Wire Fencing—5' × 20'	1	16 Gauge 2" Mesh
7	Paint	1 Gal.	Flat
8	Wire Staples	4 Lbs.	1" Long 15 Gauge

COST OF MATERIALS

ITEM	REMARKS	COST
1	5 Pieces—4" × 4" × 12'-0"—Yellow Pine Timbers S4S No. 1 Common	\$2.45
2	6 Pieces—2" × 4" × 10'-0"—No. 1 Yellow Pine—S4S	4.88
3	13 Pieces—1" × 6" × 14'-0"—No. 1 Yellow Pine S4S —Air Dried	6.20
4	Nails—Cement Coated—8D—3 Lbs.—Common	.24
5	Nails—Cement Coated—16D—3 Lbs.—Common	.24
6	Wire Fencing—5' × 20'—16 Gauge—2" Mesh—Gal- vanized	1.40
7	Paint—1 Gal.—Flat	2.50
8	Wire Staples—1" Long—15 Gauge—4 Lbs.	.24
Approximate Total Cost		<u>\$18.15</u>

Order material from specifications given in "Remarks" Column of the "Cost of Materials" Table.

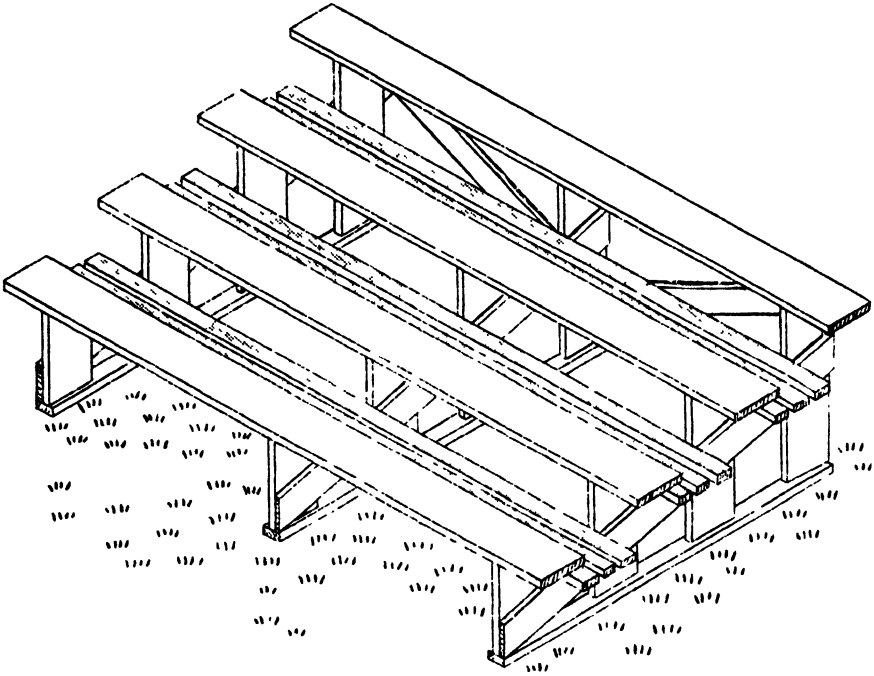


FIG. 12. Bleacher Section

BLEACHER SECTION

METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION

1. Dig the trenches for the sills—approximately 8 inches deep—4" wide and 7'-4" long.
2. Cut the 2" \times 4" \times 7'-4" sills to size.
3. Cut the uprights to size from the 2" \times 12" stock.
4. Nail the sills to the uprights.
5. Lay out, cut, and fasten the three 2" \times 8" inclined side braces in place.
6. Cut to size and nail the foot-rest cleats in place.
7. Set the sills and uprights in the trenches. Refill the trenches, line the uprights aplomb, and tamp the earth.
8. Nail the seats and foot-rests in place.
9. Lay out and cut the 1" \times 6" back braces and the back brace cleats to size.
10. Nail these cleats to the back center uprights.
11. Nail the back braces in place.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CARE AND UPKEEP

1. A coat of creosote or crank case oil on the parts under ground will help preserve them.

2. Two coats of flat paint will prevent to a great extent, the effect of weather on the wood.
3. Remove all refuse and combustible materials from beneath the bleachers as often as possible.
4. Inspect the bleachers once every month for loose nails; special precautions should be given to the nails in the foot-rest cleats.

BILL OF MATERIALS

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	NO. REQ'D.	REMARKS
1	Uprights—2" × 12" × 1'-8 $\frac{3}{8}$ "	3	Norway Pine
2	Uprights—2" × 12" × 2'-3 $\frac{3}{8}$ "	3	" "
3	Uprights—2" × 12" × 2'-10 $\frac{3}{8}$ "	3	" "
4	Uprights—2" × 12" × 3'-5 $\frac{3}{8}$ "	3	" "
5	Seats—2" × 12" × 12'-0"	4	" "
6	Footrests—22" × 4" × 12'-0"	9	" "
7	Cleats—2" × 4" × 1'-2"	9	" "
8	Sills—2" × 4" × 7'-4"	3	" "
9	Ends & Center Inclined Braces— 2" × 8" × 9'-0"	3	" "
10	Back Braces—1" × 6" × 6'-6"	2	" "
11	Cleats for Back Braces— 1" × 6" × 7"	2	" "
12	Cement Coated Nails—12 Penny	2 Lbs.	Common
13	Cement Coated Nails—16 Penny	4 Lbs.	"

COST OF MATERIALS

ITEM	REMARKS	COST
1-2	1 Piece—2" × 12" × 14'-0"—No. 1 Norway Pine	\$ 2.05
3-4-5	6 Pieces—2" × 12" × 12'-0"—No. 1 Norway Pine	10.52
6-7	10 Pieces—2" × 4" × 12'-0"—No. 1 Norway Pine	5.45
8	3 Pieces—2" × 4" × 8'-0"—No. 1 Norway Pine	1.09
9	3 Pieces—2" × 8" × 9'-0"—No. 1 Norway Pine	2.45
10-11	1 Piece—1" × 6" × 16'-0"—No. 1 Norway Pine	.56
12	Cement Coated Common Nails—2 Lbs.—12 Penny	.16
13	Cement Coated Common Nails—4 Lbs.—16 Penny	.32

Approximate Total Cost \$22.60

Order material from specifications given in "Remarks" Column of the "Cost of Materials" Table.

The foot rests are fastened to cleats which are nailed to the inclined 2x8's. The cleats are made from 2x4's.

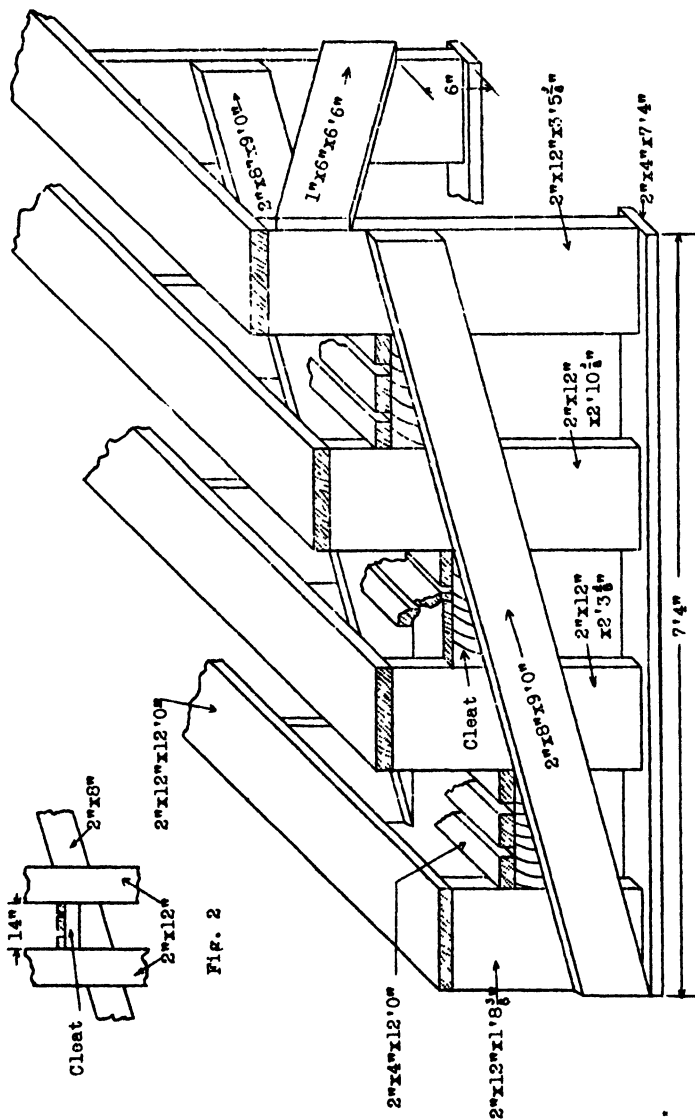


Fig. 2

FIG. 13. Bleacher Section (Isometric of End Elevation)

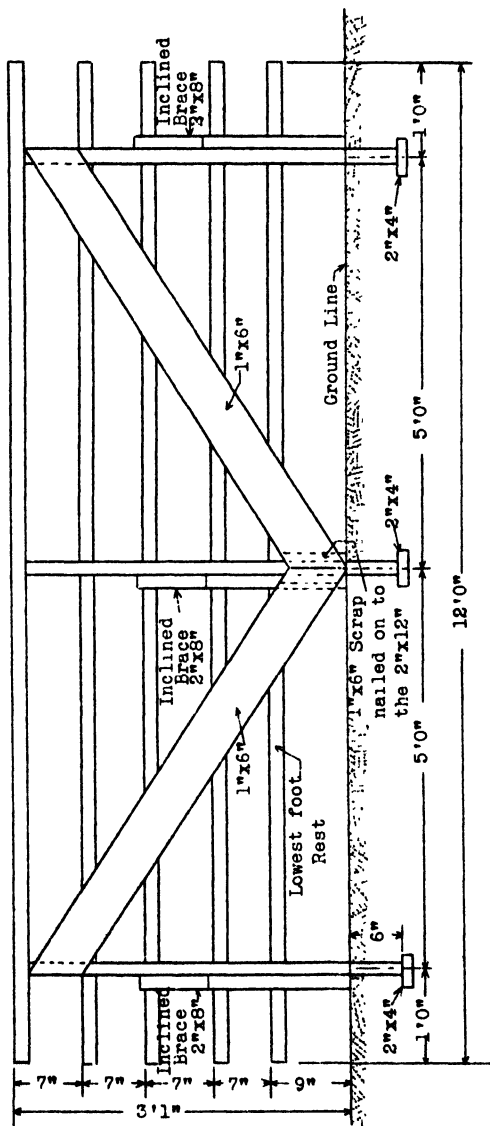


FIG. 14. Bleacher Section (Back Elevation)

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